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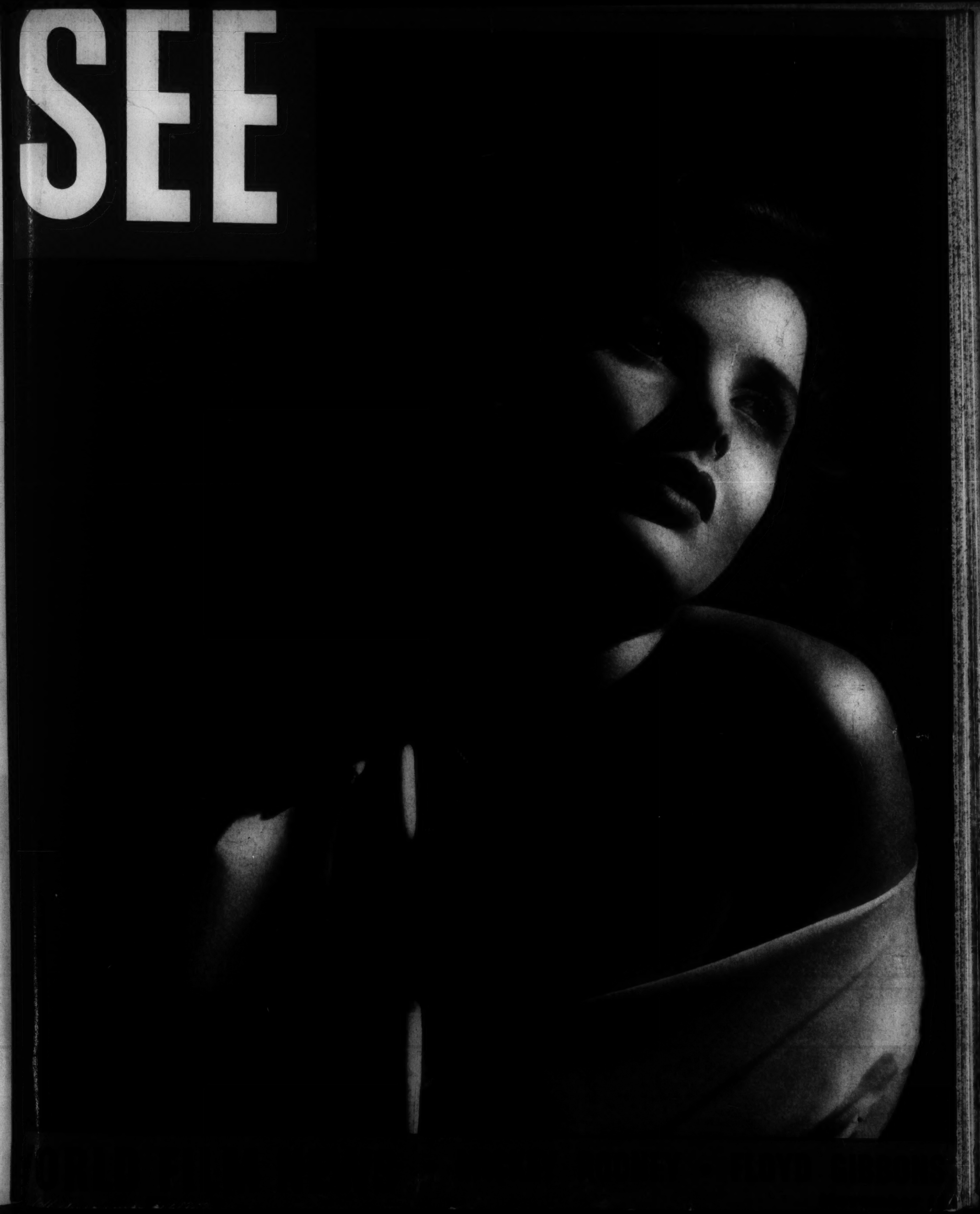

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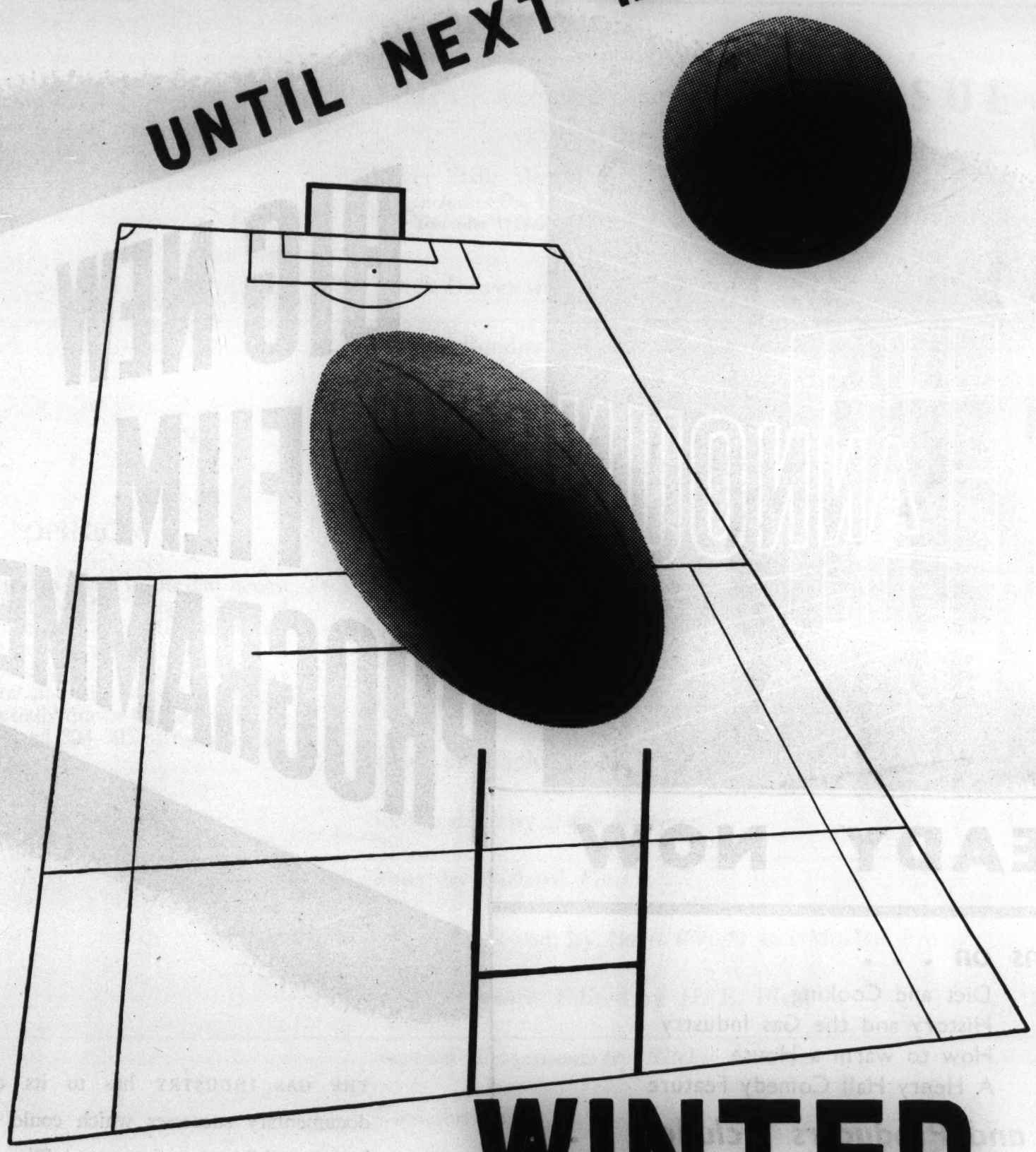

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SEE

NOVEMBER 1938

Vol. 3 No. 7

OPINION

The censorship that seeks to prevent honest pictures of Britain: the alleged bias of newsreel treatment of the Munich Agreement: and the entire political reference of the cinema to-day, are matters of grave public concern and the attention of our readers is especially drawn to the articles on pages 294–295 and 304–305 of this number.

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TRUCK-DRIVER WITH CLARINET

by Martin Coffyn

"He can do more with that black stick than a monkey can do with a cocoanut . ." is how 'Fats' Waller speaks of band leader Joe Marsala.

WE'RE in a large, high-ceilinged room full of tables and chairs, but our eyes go to an enormous, oval bar which occupies the centre of the room and then immediately to the phenomenon which has brought us, with hundreds of others, to the Hickory House this afternoon.

For in the centre of the bar, on a raised platform, stands smiling, handsome Joe Marsala with his clarinet and as he waves to greet us, the six members of his band are starting to ride out on *Muskrat Ramble*, that classic of early jazz.

We take our seats at the bar and soon Joe is going to town on his clarinet in a long, flowing rhythm that has us beating time with our feet on the bar rail. Now the tenor sax is taking a chorus—then the bass fiddle beats out a soft, throaty rhythm, and finally the whole band takes the melody off into a jungle chant that has the "alligators" jumping up and down in their chairs.

Now it's *Hot String Beans*, and look—that's the famous Tommy Dorsey who's getting up from his seat to sit in with the band—and will we have music! But wait—here comes Gene Krupa too!

This is Swing Heaven—and soon we're listening to such inspired improvisation that even the angels are probably flapping their wings in time to the down beat of this unearthly music.

We move over to a table near the bar and

Adele Girard

join "Fats" Waller and Duke Ellington, two more of the famous musicians who regularly drop in on Joe Marsala's Sunday afternoon jam sessions.

"He can do more with that black stick than a monkey can do with a cocoanut," says "Fats", and we know just what he means as Joe tilts his clarinet towards the stars and the sobbing tremolo of his rhythm reaches right out into our very souls.

But now the jam session pauses for a while and we go over to a table in the rear where Joe comes over to join us for the interval. Let's ask this virtuoso of the clarinet some questions and find out why he has become known as a "musician's musician", for when one musician praises another, that's news—and praise indeed. And regularly, every Sunday, we can find not only the band leaders mentioned, but such other top-ranking musicians as Bobby Hackett, Pee Wee Hunt, Glen Gray, Artie Shaw, and Willie (The Lion) Smith.

"WELL," says Joe, "I was born in Chicago and started learning the saxophone when I was ten years old. One day I hit a sharp instead of a flat while I was playing *Ave Maria* for my teacher and he was so disgusted with me that I became depressed and sold my horn.

"I had to go to work in 1920, driving a truck, but my brother Marty was playing in a small band in the style of the old Dixieland Jazz Band, and one night the clarinet player got married and left the band. That was my chance and I jumped into his place almost before I could play the instrument, and I took lessons on the side of Clarence Warmelin of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra.

"We played speakeasies, clubs, smokers, and any other dates we could get for several years. I went to Milwaukee for a short time in 1928, and then back to Chicago in 1929 where I came of age and joined the union and played with a succession of bands.

"In 1933, Jack Teagarden, Wingy Mannone and I, with several others, organised a small swing band and got a job playing on a roof speakeasy just outside the entrance of the Chicago World's Fair.

"We played in what is now known as 'Chicago Style', a sort of indefinable free-and-easy improvisation—and I guess that's what started all the musicians in town coming over to our place after they'd finished their regular work.

"Well, there were lots of moves after that—Florida, Palm Beach and Miami in the winter—and an unforgetable season on the road with Barnes and Carruthers' Rodeo Circus, where we had to play the 'Stars and Stripes forever' in swing tempo because none of the boys in the band could read music.

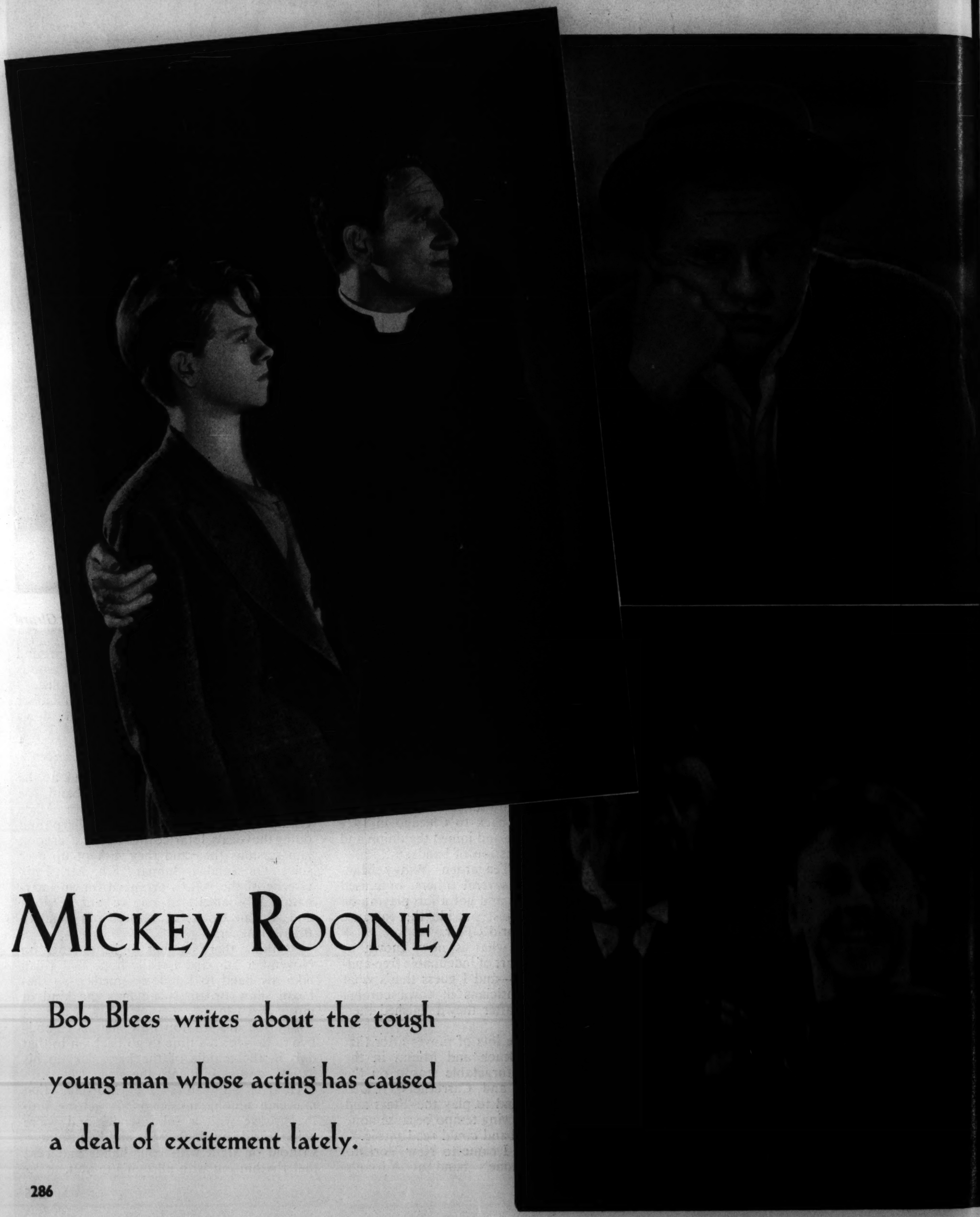
"Finally in 1935 I came to New York to join Wingy Mannone's band at Adrian's Tap Room, and from there I moved around a lot—with Louis Prima at the Famous Door—Red McKenzie at his own place—and with Riley and Farley (you remember 'The Music Goes Round and Round', don't you?) into the Hickory House.

"ON March 17th, 1937, I opened at the Hickory House with my own band, Joe Marsala and his Chicagoans, with Adele Girard playing a mean swing harp and doing the vocals. I started the Sunday afternoon jam sessions then and they've kept up ever since. On Sunday, January 8th, Mr. Felix Greene of the B.B.C. arranged for an international broadcast of one of our sessions and Alistair Cooke introduced our band to British listeners.

"I think there's going to be another on November 5th, and I really hope that I can take my band to London someday, so that I can show British swing fans the kind of music that I love."

But Joe has to stop now; he says goodbye to us—for it's time to go back on to that dais in the middle of the bar, pick up his "stick" and raise it into the air.

Hold it—alligators—Joe Marsala, that musician among musicians, is getting into the groove with a solid sender and we're going to ride out high, wide and handsome—so hold on tight with your hands and beat that rhythm out with all that's in you.



MICKEY ROONEY

Bob Blees writes about the tough young man whose acting has caused a deal of excitement lately.

TRACY-ROONEY Smash 17G in Prov. . . . *Boys' Town* Leads L. A. $32,300 . . . *Boys* Sock $29,000 . . . Tracy-Rooney Pace Indpls., $11,000 . . . *Town* Big $33,000 in N.Y. . . . *Variety*, this is, reporting the latest news of a little 17-year-old Irishman with a tendency to mug and a knack of bringing any and all kinds of people up to the ticket-wickets. The Rooney boom—and a boom it is in the States, with re-issues of The Hardy's and older Rooney *opera* a matter of course—is comparatively new. In fact, three pictures have made it, and Mickey with them. *Captains Courageous* began it, *Love Finds Andy Hardy* built it up, and *Boys' Town* parlayed the kid on to thousands of marquees and into an M.G.M. star-rating. Neither of which is tin, or hay, or peanuts, or to be sneezed at.

Whether the Rooney phenomenon is the result of a sudden desire on the part of the movie public to go back to its childhood, or a caprice that makes genuine ham acting a *sine qua non* of an enjoyable evening, is hard to say, but there it is. For Rooney's successes have given him the chance to be the lost 'teen-age of every man who might want it, of the too-swagger childhood hero—with a most unhandsome face—of every woman with a little imagination and an unwillingness to criticise lapses of manners.

Courageous let Mickey manœuvre his mug all over the screen, too, which is fine, because there are enough faces on screens that don't even make the attempt to look alive. After all, this may be the age of the heavily underlined. At any rate, Rooney is a hell of a lot more human than any other "boy actor" of the past ten years—even if the tears-cum-bathos of *Boys' Town* don't end up by being particularly sympathetic.

Rooney himself doesn't go for the "boy actor" designation. "Boy character actor" is his claim, and he sticks to it. And he has a professional background that justifies him. This Rooney boy, he would have you know, was on the stage at three years, when he toddled out from the wings and did imitations in his father's act. Then it was that his billing was Joe Yule, Jnr., which, oddly enough, is his real name. Three years after his debut, the Yules were out on the Coast, still doing their act, when Mervyn LeRoy, who hadn't even made *Public Enemy*, not to mention marrying the boss's daughter, signed little Joe for one picture. LeRoy doesn't remember the picture and hardly anyone else does, but Mickey still thinks about it, because he played a midget.

Hollywood held no objections to the Yules, and Junior got around in a series of comedies modelled not too subtly after Our Gang's. Eventually he starred in the "Mickey McGuire" two-reelers, based on the famous American comic-strip character. The idea was for Joe to change his name to Mickey McGuire, but there were legal complications, and instead he became Mickey Rooney, deemed Irish enough for the purpose.

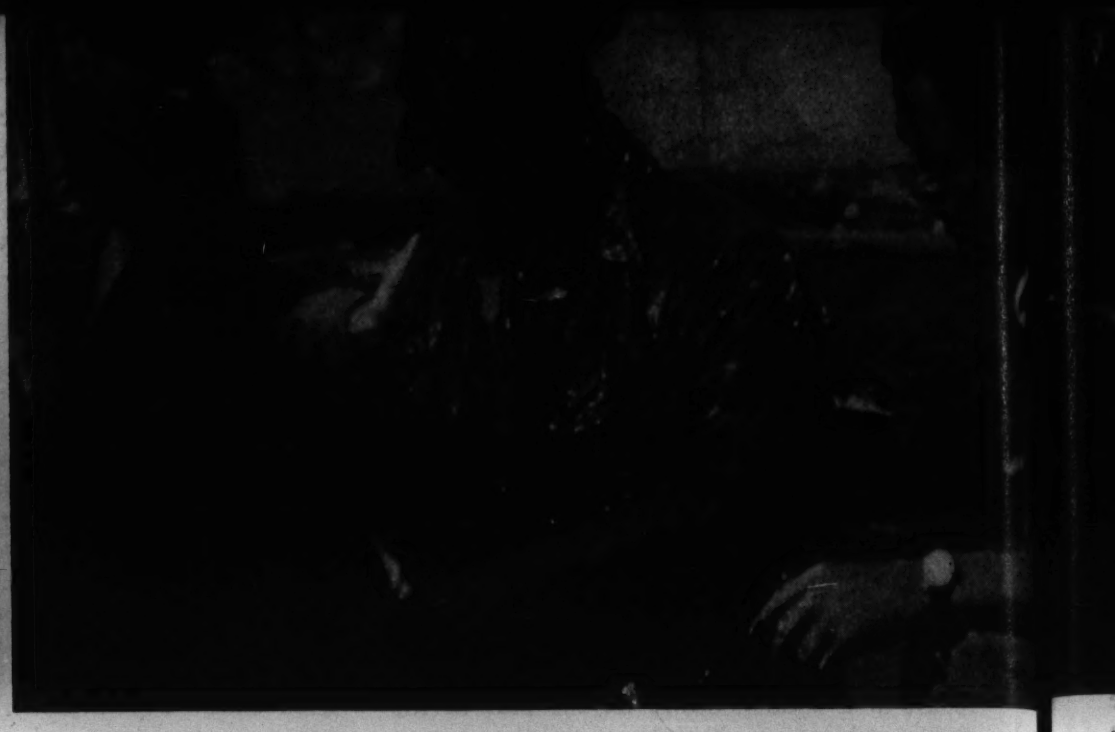
Soon after, much to their later joy, Metro signed Master Rooney to a long-termer, and began shoving him into any empty spot that required a boy from ten to fifteen. *Manhattan Melodrama* was the first of these that meant very much, and then came *Hide-Out* and *Riff-Raff*. *Ah, Wilderness!* which sold Metro on the idea of a "family" series, was Mickey's first big break, and he followed it up with *The Devil Takes the Count*, the first of the Rooney-Bartholomew affiliation. *Courageous* introduced Mickey to Spencer Tracy and a more subdued style of acting, a style that the contingent who root for Rooney believe he could well combine with his own—and would, if mugging weren't almost as successful and twice as simple.

NONE too quickly for dying exhibitors after *Courageous* came the Hardy series, which raised havoc with play dates even on Broadway, when it was discovered that shopgirls and stenographers who had never been west of the Hudson were avoiding Crawford and Francis, plus wardrobes, in droves to see Rooney in little more than situations that come twice a week to most Mid-Western families. Wham after *Andy* came *Boys' Town*, which shot Mickey to stardom, and stardom, let it be known, with Tracy. Wham after *Boys' Town* comes *Stablemates*, with Wallace Beery; and then, *qui sait?* The chances are that Mickey will be more than merely 1938's shot in the arm that poops out in '39. Metro would seem to have on hand as valuable—and as unsuspected—a property as Universal's Darrieux, which is plenty valuable. It is doubtful if Rooney's legs are as attractive or if he speaks French, but he would think it only fair to bring out that he is California's Junior Tennis champion and that he did write a song that maybe the studio will buy.

Just lately Lejeune said that she hoped to see the day when Temple was playing Camille and Rooney was the Clark Gable of his day. We'll forego Shirley, but a few more years of Mickey could make us very happy. The way things look now, he'll have all the grooming he needs, and if he flops it'll be nobody's fault but his own. If he doesn't, which we're inclined to favour, the worst looking pan in the business will be breaking hearts all over the country.

The stills on these pages are from Mickey Rooney's two newest pictures.

Top left shows Mickey Rooney with Spencer Tracy in 'Boys' Town': Top right is from the popular Judge Hardy's Children series, and below two scenes from 'The Boy From Barnardo's.'



1. *Planes swoop over Shanghai. Chris Hunter (Clark Gable) dashes into the open to get pictures. In real life he would probably have been machine-gunned to bits.* 2. *A bomb just behind him flings him into a mud pool.*

3. *Getting out, he finds his camera burst open, his film ruined. Chris: "Well, I guess I don't live right." Left, his rival (Pidgeon). Right, his sound man (Carrillo).*

Much TOO HOT to HANDLE

GLEN NORRIS scoops the scoopers with an Inside Job on the M.G.M.-Clark Gable-Myrna Loy epic of the newsreel world, which has not been well received by newsreel men.

ONCE upon a time it was the Knights of the Round Table. Roaming the world with broadsword, white steed, and faithful retainer—shining armour hiding a heart of gold. They had their sagas and legends. They were a terror to villains—a menace to fair maidens. Each Maid Marion prayed that some day the villain might come . . . and then . . . just as hope seemed lost . . . the galloping steed . . . the clash of steel . . . the rescue. My hero!

Then it was B.B.C. Announcers. "Good-night everybody, Good-night"—and a million little sighs breathed off to sleep. But there was something wrong. The modern Knights-in-Boiled-Shirts hadn't all the ingredients. Where was the adventure—inside a padded studio? What! No dragons! Men of steel, who hushed at the flicker of a mere red light? Never! But worst of all, announcers didn't roam. They were stuck in one place. Not a chance of running into one just around the corner in the Brixton Road.

But now . . . the modern Maid Marion has found a race of men with everything. They roam the world, looking for trouble. Where there's war or disaster—they're there. They're tough—but their hearts are golden. At any moment, one may appear before a lovely lady, in the street, or in her bedroom . . . raise his hat . . . a little smile please . . . thank you. My hero! For broadsword, they carry a film camera; for steed, they ride the roof of a fast car; for faithful retainer, a little man holding a microphone. They are the newsreel cameramen—the eyes and ears, that bring the world to the world.

And what's more, their first saga has been written, their first legendary hero born. For *Too Hot to Handle* is simply the story of St. George—up-to-date. Its Knight is a newsreel cameraman: Sir Clark Gable. Its Damsel-in-Distress: Maid Myrna Loy. A story padded with love and hate, death and destruction, killers and kisses. But also a cautionary tale FOR newsreelmen BY newsreelmen.

The story was written by Len Hammond, on the staff of America's Movietone Newsreel, and Laurence Stallings, free-lance cameraman, roving war correspondent. First they picked a title: *Too Hot to Handle*. That may not mean much to little Audrey, but she should know, that, in the business, a story that's "too hot" is one that blows the gaff on somebody or something, that exposes a racket, or carries frankness almost to the point of libel. And maybe little Audrey would decide that isn't a bad description of *Too Hot to Handle*. For writers Hammond and Stallings have packed every foot of it solid with hokum, spoof, badanza. They have taken the newsreels' trousers down, laid bare a buttockful of riotous absurdity. To set the mood for their yarn, they might well have paraphrased the classic opening greeting of famed American Radio Gossip Walter Winchell: "Good evening Mr. and Mrs. Film Fan—and ALL ships at sea!" Like the rat-tat-tat rhythm of a Walter Winchell broadcast, their story crackles on:

FLASH . . . bombing planes and headlines over Shanghai . . . the world waits for news . . . for pictures . . . newsreel editors scream for more action . . . more thrills . . . more blood.

FLASH . . . Shanghai . . . newsreelmen wait for trouble . . . daredevil Chris Hunter . . . notsodaredevil Bill Dennis . . . they're covering the war . . . but they're not out for facts . . . what matters to them is the scoop . . . to get something the other fellow can't.

FLASH . . . Chris gets scoop . . . plane swooping on terrified Chinese child . . . blotted out by falling wreckage . . . all a fake . . . plane just a three-foot model . . . look of terror paid for in dollar bills . . . wreckage dropped from tray above camera . . . but New York falls for it . . . loves it . . . demands more.

4. *Alma (Myrna Loy) accuses Chris of deliberately crashing her 'plane to get a shot.*

5. *Chris and Alma over the burning ammunition ship—a sequence reconstructed from actual newsreel shots of the burning Morro Castle.* 6. *Chris climbs out on to wing to get his picture.*

FLASH . . . rival Dennis tries to get even . . . stages fake "mercy flight" by girl friend Alma Harding . . . flying in at night with imaginary serum for imaginary cholera outbreak . . . Chris locked out of airport . . . sneaks in at the last moment . . . rides out on field to get close-up of plane landing . . . rides too close . . . crashes plane . . . it blazes . . . leaves camera turning while he saves girl . . . dawn of love.

FLASH . . . Alma suspects Chris staged crash to get picture . . . Chris double-crosses Alma . . . pretends to destroy film of crash . . . but destroys blank instead.

FLASH . . . Bill double-crosses Chris . . . steals crash film . . . sends it to rival newsreel as own shots . . . arranges to sign up Alma to rival reel too.

FLASH . . . Chris double-crosses Bill . . . gets Alma back to New York on faked "they've fired me" story . . . signs her up for own company.

FLASH . . . Chris and Alma fly out to get shots of burning ammunition ship . . . when ship blows up they're just a few hundred feet above it . . . but they get the pictures . . . scoop all rivals.

FLASH . . . Bill blackmails Chris on past fakes . . . unless Chris gets Bill a copy of the burning ship pictures . . . Chris double-crosses his boss to get a copy for Bill.

FLASH . . . rival newsreel bosses get together . . . check-up on Chris and Bill's double-crossings . . . Chris, Bill and Alma fired.

FLASH . . . Chris and Bill get together . . . make amends to Alma by raising cash to send her to South America jungle to find long lost brother . . . Chris double-crosses Bill . . . follows her . . . Bill double-crosses Chris's boss . . . finds out where Chris has gone . . . gets there first by faster plane.

FLASH . . . Chris double-crosses Bill . . . finds long lost brother first . . . saves him from horrible Voo-Doo death by screening newsreel to terrified blacks . . . gets exclusive pictures of rescue . . . rushes them back to New York.

FLASH . . . Alma decides she owes all to Chris . . . finds him filming gangster hunt . . . crowds screaming . . . bullets zinging . . . she dashes to his side . . . tells him love has flowered . . . he smears blood on her face . . . gets faked shot of wounded lady . . . happy ending . . . fade out.

It's all so simple. Brave knights doing battle for fair lady—but she's the only thing that is fair. But what does it matter. Writers Hammond and Stallings have planted tongues firmly in cheeks, from the first flash of Chris looking for the war in a Chinese night-club, to his final wink as he shoots Alma's blood-stained face. Out of a crazy business, they've made the craziest story. When Alma joins up with Chris's company, she asks: "What kind of a business is this?" And the boss's secretary put all in one line: "Oh, it's swell! You don't know you're in the violent ward till you're strapped down to the bed!" But it's a ripping, roaring, crackling story. The fans will love it; the box-office will roll in it. Only the real newsreelmen will hate it, tear it to pieces. Why wait till they do. Here's what they're going to say:

When Chris goes up in the plane with Alma to shoot the burning ship, all he takes is a tiny hand camera. No sign of microphone, amplifiers, or sound recording gear. Yet when he gets his picture back to headquarters, there's all the sound of the fire, the plane, the sirens, and the explosion. That isn't newsreel, that's magic.

When the ammunition ship goes up in one raging crash, Chris and Alma are close enough to have their plane blown to pulp under them. Yet they get away with a gentle shake up.

To save Alma's brother, get on the right side of the natives, Chris gives a talkie show in the jungle. But to get to that spot he had to paddle four days up the Amazon River in a small size canoe. How did he carry the talkie gear, giant screen, loudspeakers, projectors, and so on? Maybe it was Voo-Doo.

Too Hot to Handle has plenty more like that; for the real newsreelmen to yowl about. But what does it matter. Their yowls will only prove that they're tough, but not tough enough to take it: that they have a nose for news, but not nose enough to spot the year's grandest slam. And maybe they won't notice too, that *Too Hot to Handle* has something else. Right in the middle, its rollicking rhythm stops dead, for the neatest sum-up of the whole philosophy of newsreel. Alma is seeing on the screen for the first time the pictures she helped Chris shoot over the burning ship . . . men jumping for their lives . . . a tiny coastguard cutter risking destruction . . . picking up survivors from alongside the blazing ammunition . . . Alma can't bear it . . . she breaks down:

ALMA: Why do people want to look at such things?

CHRIS: Well, I don't know. I never thought about it. But it's news, and they do want to.

ALMA: They shouldn't be allowed to.

CHRIS: Well, maybe it goes deeper than that. It's news, but it's the kind that's good for people. We're living in a crazy, mixed-up world, aren't we? Everybody grumbling and growling, and at each other's throats. But here, millions of people are suddenly going to be reminded, right between the eyes what true human idealism really is. Four men and a guy waving his hat in a tiny boat—doing their job—giving their lives for people they don't even know. Because it's their job. Savvy?

THE OTHER WOMAN

Maybe she's just a deal of trouble to the home, but MARY ELWYN thinks there's a lot to be said for the "other woman" who, in any case, is indispensable to movie makers.

Marlene Dietrich in "Song of Songs"

IN film, song and story the most maligned figure is always known as "The Other Woman". Perhaps she's just a bit of peroxided trouble round your home, but you film makers couldn't get along without her, so isn't it about time somebody went in for a bit of fair play and showed the other side of her soul, which we are all supposed to possess?

Give her false whiskers, change her into a bit of the firmament or a pet mouse, but if you want to make a film you've got to have her in one form or the other. That's how Myrna Loy found herself up against a strange version of the Other Woman theme in *Test Pilot* —and it sort of took a new technique to cope with things when your husband's gal was the sky.

Usually The Other Woman is used to give the public its quota of what it likes best, the high cost of loving as typified by alluring ladies edited by Adrian.

Or you can have a cute picture featuring an effective serum like the *Three Smart Girls* against fatherly O.W. trouble.

Or seven former wives to upset the apple-cart of Bluebeard's eighth.

Of course sometimes the primitive threat of an Other Woman is upset by the niceties of civilised behaviour. This was the case in *Un Carnet de Bal* when the calm attitude of various episodic wives towards their husband's still handsome past was a treat to behold. In *Algiers*, née *Pépé le Moko*, the velvet and perfume of the new love got somehow tangled up with Pépé's nostalgia for Paris, his desire for escape from the silken, sweaty tatters and the narrow white walls of the Casbah.

But for a really seasoned, time-honoured and respectable bit of Other Womaning done in the imperial manner, nothing could be nicer than *A Royal Divorce*.

They *do* say that Josephine was not all that she might have been, that playing Empress in the most devastating wardrobe in Paris had a greater appeal for her than being the wife of Le Petit Caporal—be that as it may, she was still the injured wife if only for reasons of state, and has done a fine job with the sentiments of succeeding generations.

And so this one-sided business goes on. Of course, there should be a Federation of Other Women just to see that "everythink is fair and above board", as Mrs. Miffin, the voluptuous char and a notorious O.W., would have it.

CONSIDER *The Great Ziegfeld* wherein Luise Rainer got the Motion Picture Academy award for presenting a life-like study of the wronged wife. As a cold observer it appears that such a mess of psychological vomit was excuse enough for husband trouble at its worst, and enough to turn the stomach of an honest-to-god Other Woman.

Come, come, let us be fair. Think of all the wives you know who are uninventive cooks and unimaginative mistresses and won't have toys about the house—what man can stand for that indefinitely?

Often a man has to put up with plenty of nagging into the bargain, and the *malade imaginaire* is more often a wife than not. Now we know that in films these couples will find redress for their troubles without necessarily having recourse to the wiles of another woman. They will have a fine old drunken orgy together, skin their knuckles in a free-for-all and end up the best of friends during the resulting hang-over.

That's fine, but actually what happens in this sad world is that the man who is what is known as a decent fellow usually tries to make the best of it. Probably avoids marital trouble by staying out with the boys most evenings and on Saturday nights takes the missus and the kids to the cinema when he'd much rather be playing poker at the club.

Then he meets a woman who finds him so much cleverer than herself, and is pretty unexacting into the bargain. His wife's nagging ceases to be so important to him, and the thought that by the world's code he is wronging her makes him unusually patient and thoughtful. He gets from the other woman just that something his wife cannot give, and their home is a happier place because of her.

But do we ever see that phase of real life on the cinema? Of course we don't.

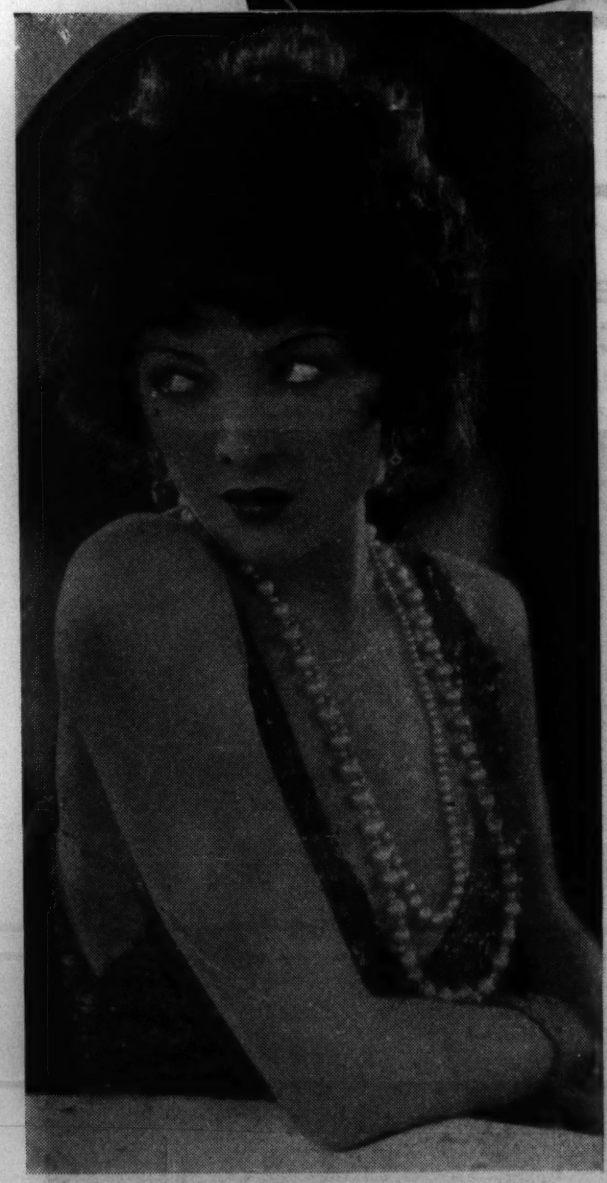
We get plenty of embryo and actual Other Women on the screen, but their mission is never to bring happiness. The screen gives you Bette Davis in *Jezebel*, all tumbling curls and saucy posturings, but finishing on a note of doubtful authenticity.

In *Black Limelight* the O.W. didn't do much harm until she went and got herself murdered, and her unkindest cut was always the fact that she was from what is known as a "lower class" than the wife and mother.

Now a really promising O.W. was the scheming puss played by Vivien Leigh in *A Yank at Oxford*; quite possibly she might settle down and turn into a little ray of sunshine for somebody.

Sometimes directors confuse the issue by changing the O.W. into a bit of sky, maybe a horse, or a profession for a hero who has a passion for that sort of thing. Ah, but in the old days things were simpler. It was only for the virgin of his dreams that the hero of melodrama would consider rupturing himself to rescue her from the burning tenth floor—if he were to save his wife or an even faintly-heliotrope lady-love, what a hiss would go up from the audience!

At other times, thinking to sneak by and eliminate one corner from the old triangle, directors go in for marrying people off well before the story opens. Then its shoulder to shoulder, with the old marriage lines safe in the piano stool, and the darkest hour comes not from some sly puss with home-breaking tendencies, but against the call of the something-or-other, spaces, careers, super-gangs, goodness knows what-not, which calls them both as the rapids call to the spawning salmon.



Top right: Miss Lilian Tashman.
Above: Myrna Loy.

When the wife, still a legal encumbrance, becomes technically the Other Woman, things come to a pretty pass. According to Cal York of "Photoplay", just that has become the role of Mrs. Rhea Gable, who is sticking to her legal rights while the sympathy is going out to a couple of nice people, husband Clark and Carole Lombard, for whom wife-trouble is the barrier between them and a fifty-acre ranch in the San Fernando Valley.

Of course there are some people that make it a duty for *all* women to try and be the Other Woman as far as they are concerned. What possible excuse could be found for *any* woman not trying all her box of tricks on W. C. Fields, Charlie McCarthy, Slicker the Seal (I do hope it's not 'Miss' Slicker) and Gary Cooper?

Of course every woman in an audience is unfaithful most of her film life—so what does she suppose her husband is doing? After all there are enough celluloid Loys, Crawfords, Dietrichs, Lamours and Russells if placed end to end to reach a couple of times round the world. You can't grumble about a strip of celluloid however it's decorated—it's when it stands upright, weighs around 120 and can say "gimmee" that it gets a nuisance to have around the house—but take heart, even then its disguise may be a better-tempered husband and a happier home. Not many wives in these days have to lurch into the snow as the bailiffs break up the furniture—while the husband sits in a homey bar saying "how now, my proud beauty" to a bosomy Diamond Lil.

GIBBONS: All right, boys, what can I do for you?

REPORTER: Well, Floyd, my paper wants some dope on your new thrill pictures.

GIBBONS: Fine! Take a seat. Shoot—go ahead shoot, Jack . . . no posing though. The idea is brand new, Joe, never before done in movies. I'm making real motion pictures of true adventures in the lives of everyday people, in the office, in the home, factory, farm, city or small town, and I'm paying good money for them.

REPORTER: Say, I've got an adventure for you, Floyd—I——

GIBBONS: You bet you have. Every man, woman and child has had some adventure sometime or other in their lives. I want that adventure. I want them to write to me and tell me all about it. See that mail over there? Those are real life adventures sent to me from everyday people. I pick my scenarios from them and—not from Hollywood. Now here's one . . . it comes from a little fellow by the name of Edward W. Capps, of Detroit, Michigan. By the way Miss Alter, have you heard from Mister Capps? Is he in the——

SECRETARY: He'll be right in, Mr. Gibbons.

GIBBONS: Fine—here's one that'll blow your hat off. This happened back in the horse and buggy days down in the most beautiful spot in America—the Cumberland mountains in South Eastern Kentucky. Our hero Eddie Capps is just twenty-two years old. A hustling young salesman for the Keystone Tobacco Company. In those days salesmen often travelled through the rugged mountain country on horseback.

Johnson: Here you are, Eddie. The weather looks kind of threatening.

Eddie: Oh, I'll get through all right, Mr. Johnson. United Tobacco Co. won't get the jump on me this trip.

Johnson: Well, I'm all for you, Eddie, but Gus Lobe's been selling for United up in that hill country for a long time.

Eddie: Say! I hear Gus left yesterday. Oh, well, I'll hustle along. I'll catch up with him.

Johnson: That's the spirit, Eddie. I'll see you when you get back.

Eddie: Right! So long.

Johnson: So long.

(*Eddie Capps is leaving on horseback: his boss sees him off.*)

GIBBONS: Well, sir, somebody told him about a short cut through the mountains. It was just a backwoods trail, but it cut off twelve miles—so Eddie took it—night found him in the heart of those lonely mountains—

The ATTIC of TERROR

A Warner Bros. new True Life Adventure Short, commentated by Floyd Gibbons.

a storm came up—it rained cats and dogs. After prodding along in the storm for hours, believe me, the lights in the ramshackled cabin in the woods looked mighty good to Eddie. The boy is wet, tired and hungry. His horse is ready to drop. Gus Lobe or no Gus Lobe, Eddie and his horse just can't go any further.

(*Eddie knocks at the door of the cabin. The door opens and an elderly man and woman peer out at him.*)

Maw: Who's out there, Clayt?

Clayt: A stranger in these parts.

Maw: What's he adoin' out a night like this?

Eddie: I'm a salesman and I got caught in the storm, ma'am. I'm not sure of the road. That bacon you're cooking sure smells good, ma'am. Say, I wonder if I could come in here until the storm's over and maybe get a bite to eat. I'll be glad to pay you well for it.

Maw: How about it, Clayt?

Clayt: I reckon it'll be all right. Maw, put on another rasher of bacon.

Maw: I'm satisfied.

Eddie: Oh, gosh, thanks.

Clayt: You can tie your horse in the shed back yonder—yer snack will be ready in a little bit.

Eddie: All right, thank you.

GIBBONS: Well, sir, Eddie felt a little better with his horse in the stable and some corn pone and bacon under his belt but outside the storm redoubled in fury and young Mr. Capps began wishing he hadn't been so anxious to catch up with Gus Lobe.

Eddie: Gosh, looks like it's never going to let up.

Clayt: No, it don't.

Eddie: Say, why don't you use some of my tobacco instead of that brand your smoking. It's a whole lot better. Gee, I was just thinking, it's getting kinda late. Say, do you think you could put me up for the night so I could get an early start in the morning. I'll pay you well for your shelter.

Clayt: I reckon we can put you up.

Maw: Whar?

Clayt: Up above.

Eddie: Oh, that'll be all right.

Clayt: Can't put you no other place.

Eddie: It's a whole lot better than going out in the rain.

Clayt: Well, young feller, I reckon, you're right tired—wanna turn in?

Eddie: Yey, guess I'd better.

Clayt: You ain't aiming to leave afore we get up?

Eddie: Why no, Oh, I guess I better pay you now, huh?

Clayt: No, no, that's all right.

GIBBONS: Eddie Capps is a pretty tired boy. All he wants now is a place to rest his weary body. He feels secure, sheltered from the storm. But, boy, oh boy, he doesn't know what's coming to him in that lonely mountain cabin.

(*The old man takes Eddie upstairs to the attic.*)

Clayt: That'll be yourn over yonder.

Eddie: What's that? Who is that over there?

"A Dead Man!"

Clayt: Daid man.
Eddie: Dead man? Oh, what's he doing up here?
Clayt: Just went to sleep and didn't wake up. Been dead a day . . . been waitin' for it to stop raining so's we could take him out.
Eddie: Well, I don't think I'd like to stay up here.
Clayt: Wal, there's nobody makin' you stay, stranger. I reckon you might find it mighty damp outside.
Eddie: Don't know what to do.
Clayt: (*laughs*) He won't harm you none, it's the live ones you gotta be feared on.
Eddie: I guess you're right.
Clayt: Good night.
Eddie: Oh, could I have the lamp?
Clayt: I reckon you kin have it.
Eddie: Thanks.
Clayt: Good-night.
Eddie: Good-night.

GIBBONS: Now sleep seemed to be out of the question for Eddie after what he had just learned . . . but he was dog-tired. He had to get some rest so he took off his coat and shoes and lay down on the hard bed. The drumming on the roof of the rain lulled him. Soon he was sound asleep. The thunder did not waken him but something else did. In a sleepy daze he hears the sound of voices. Is he dreaming? Is it morning? No he's not dreaming and it's not morning. It's still night. By golly, what a night for poor Eddie. What's that light coming through the crack of the floor?

(*Through the crack Eddie sees the old man and woman searching his saddle bags.*)

Maw: Did you find it?

GIBBONS: Yes, those are real voices all right. What's going on down there. Who is that big man with the others. What are they doing? And how did his saddle bags get down there?

Clayt: Th'ain't no money ther.
Maw: He must hev it on him.
Giant: What are you going to do now?
Clayt: Wal, do yuh want the money?
Giant: Sure.
Maw: Better watch out. He might wake up this time.
Giant: We'll take care o' that.

GIBBONS: Eddie is wide awake now and plenty frightened. These people are thieves, perhaps worse, They might even be murderers. His mind flashes to the man in the other bed . . . the dead man. Perhaps he too had come here seeking shelter, only to find death. They are murderers. Eddie's heart goes into his mouth. The crushed skull of the dead tells him all he wants to know, and that's not all. He recognizes the poor battered features of his friend and rival—Gus Lobe. Gus Lobe, clubbed to death, murdered in this very room. Gosh, I wouldn't want to be in Eddie Capps' shoes for a million dollars. It is his zero hour. Fate is closing in on him. He wants to get out of this house of death before they come for him. But how? No window up here. One way out—through that trap door. And yet, going down that trap door will put him in the hands of the killers. But you better do something. There's no time to waste, Eddie. Sheer terror gives him an idea. Why not change places with the dead man. That's it, put Gus in his bed and take Gus's place. Eddie works fast. The noise of the storm muffles his movements. He lifts the dead body of Gus Lobe and carries it to his own bed. Carefully he places the dead man to appear as though he were sleeping. And Eddie climbs into the blood-soaked bed just in the nick of time, and pulls that awful blanket over his head. The seconds drag like years as Eddie lies waiting in the bed of the dead man.

(*The Giant batters at the body in Eddie's bed with a club.*)

Clayt: Shh! Let's see where he put his money.

(*As the Giant and the old man go to search the corpse, a knock is heard at the door. Two men enter.*)

Men: Hi, thar!
Maw: Clayt!
Mountaineers: Hawdy, Belle! Where's Clayt?
Maw: Him and Ike's aputtin' some things up above. Clayt!

(*The two descend from the attic.*)

GIBBONS: An hour drags by. Eddie was still alive, but his position was more dangerous than ever. Those murderers could not let him escape now—he might talk, but his nerves would not let him stay in that room of death another minute. He had to get out someway. Beneath that trap door, four men are seated around the table, but Eddie realises that it's time for a desperate move. It's now or never.

(*Eddie runs for it, amid cries of "Don't let him get away!"*)

Eddie dashed straight for the stable, threw himself on his horse and galloped off into the night. He reached Barberville safely and by morning was riding back with the Sheriff and a posse. They caught the murderers and Court House records show that the old man and his wife were sent to prison for life—the actual killer was hanged—and Joe, that ends the true adventure of Eddie Capps.

CAPPS: Here's Eddie Capps in person, Floyd.
GIBBONS: Well, I'm glad to see you, Mr. Capps, and you don't look a day older either.
REPORTERS: Congratulations, Mr. Capps. Well, Floyd, we've got to be getting along. So long!

"The crushed skull tells him all . . ."

"Robbers!"

GIBBONS: And now, Mr. Capps, I have the honour to present you my personal check for $250.00 for that wonderful story and don't forget you still have a chance to win that $1,000.00 prize.
CAPPS: Thank you, Floyd. I'll be seeing you.
GIBBONS: Just a minute, Mr. Capps, if you please. May I ask just what you are going to do with all that money.
CAPPS: I'm going to buy hot tomales with it.
GIBBONS: Hot tomales?
CAPPS: No kidding, Floyd. I run a hot tomale manufactory in Detroit.
GIBBONS: Oh, excuse me. I didn't know that. That story of yours was certainly a hot tomale.

AND now boys and girls, young and old, remember that you and you and you all have an adventure that I can use. It doesn't have to be as blood-curdling as the one about Eddie Capps to win the two hundred and fifty dollar prize or to be eligible for that $1,000.00 grand prize paid for the best story of the entire series. You just write to me about it—write me the facts. They must be true—never mind how you write them, I'll take care of that. Address your letter to me, care of Warner Brothers Studio, New York City.

The POLITICS of SIXTY GLORIOUS YEARS

Without endorsing every dot and comma of this challenging statement, SEE welcomes it as bringing into the open a matter of immense interest to the British public to-day.

THE film trade papers have, as the result of one or two newsreels of political items, been arguing in the cause of "No Politics on the Screen." They argue that it is bad for a cinema manager to offend any of his patrons in this way, as they must necessarily be of mixed political views. Yet this talk is becoming dangerous, for it is easy to argue in the abstract for no politics on the screen, but when it comes to a definition of what can be shown and what must be forbidden all writers on the subject have found themselves in a quandary. One writer, approving the deletion of certain liberal sentiments from a newsreel, said in the same paragraph that that newsreel was distinguished for its favourable handling of the Premier's "successful Munich agreement." If that last statement is not politics on the screen, then Mr. Chamberlain is not a politician. What would be the attitude of the writer had Mr. Attlee been the Prime Minister? Would he have agreed that a favourable presentation of his doings was above politics?

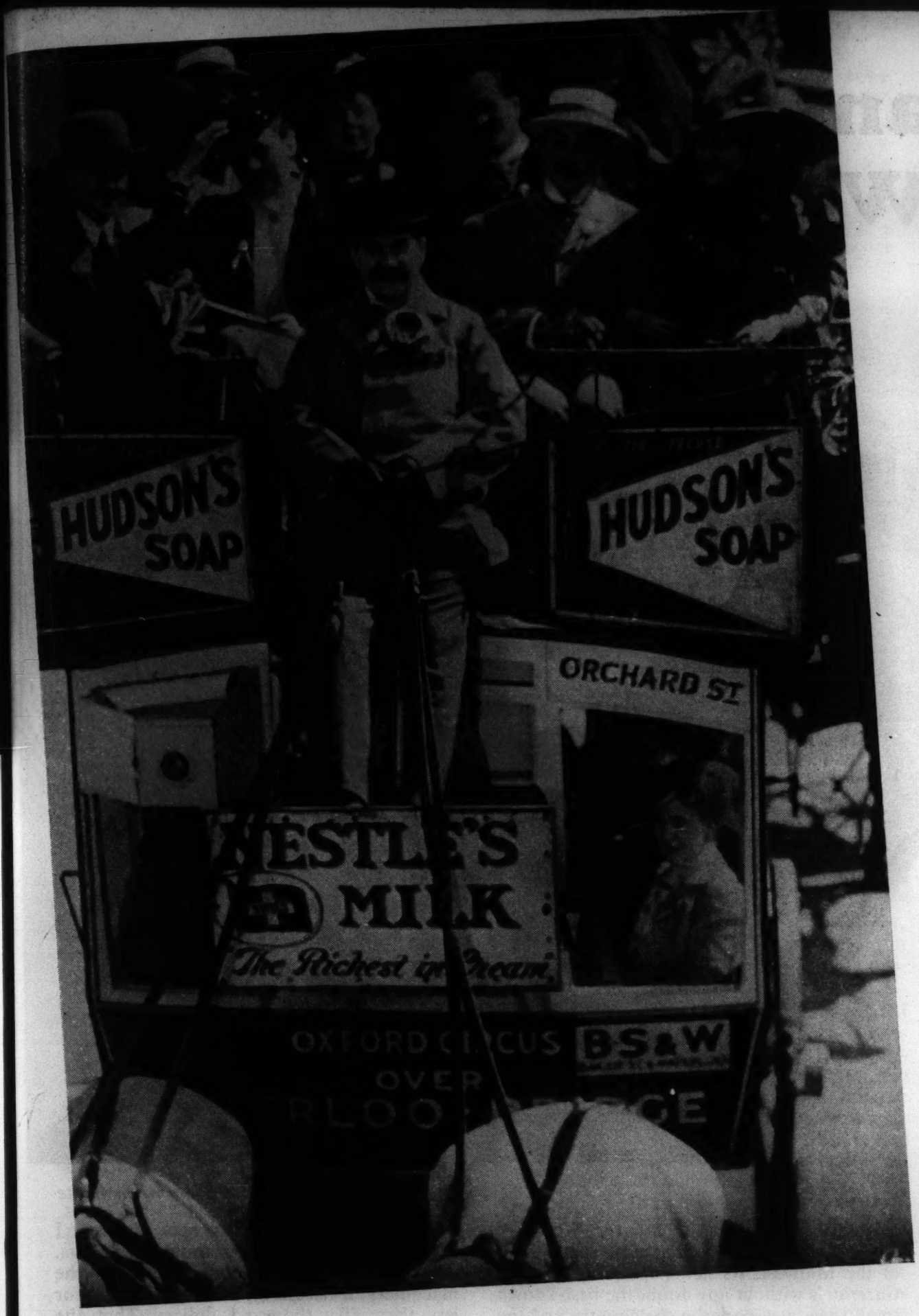
The issue of No Politics on the Screen, except when favourable to conservative politicians, shows where the interests of the film industry lie. Yet it is counter to the very object they have in mind. That is, not to offend their patrons. There are millions of people to whom the face of Mr. Chamberlain and his doings are as objectionable as the face and doings of Mr. Attlee are to many millions of others. It is significantly akin to fascism this policy, for, to develop the argument to its logical conclusion, Mr. Chamberlain, the leader, is above politics, and his voice can be heard all over the land to the exclusion of all others. If the cinema industry truly believed in No Politics on the Screen, then there should be no Mr. Chamberlain, unless Mr. Attlee, Sir Archibald Sinclair and Mr. Harry Pollit had a similar amount of screen time. For that is true democracy—a free voice to all the people. The Semitic origin of the majority of the cinema industry should make them consider the value of maintaining a free voice.

This leads to a consideration of *Sixty Glorious Years*. Most of the controversy in the film trade concerns newsreels. They have tended to ignore the politics of feature films. Yet *Sixty Glorious Years* is a propaganda film. It has the unanimous support of all our newspapers; even the left-wing papers, who ignore the political effect of films, endorse it.

It is, in many ways, a curious film. It is called "An Intimate Diary"—perhaps to reassure the exhibitor that he is getting a personal story with star value. This intimate diary gives the producers an excuse to ignore the great happenings of the Victorian era; the establishment of an Empire, the building of industry, the great engineering works, the discoveries in medicine. They excuse the ignoring of these things by calling the film an intimate diary. However, the intimate diary does not prevent the producers launching into the Crimean War and the Siege of Khartoum.

In many ways all films are propaganda. *Sixty Glorious Years* was undoubtedly initiated as a film production for commercial ends, but it is disturbing to note the connection of Sir Robert Vansittart as adviser. Sir Robert was translated in the Foreign Office to be Chief of British Propaganda. It is not possible that he entered the job without thinking of the propaganda value to the Government of such a film as *Sixty Glorious Years*. The film's producers obviously had good intentions; they wanted royalty at the premiere and they wanted permission to shoot at the Royal Palaces. It was good business to have Sir Robert. He cannot have been hired for his knowledge of the period, for there are many better experts. The producers wanted prestige and they obtained it through Sir Robert. What else they obtained is reflected in the film.

ON the whole, the film reflects a political ideal of a benevolent leader hampered by inefficient advisers. More than once the democratic method is criticised. Victoria or her contemporary prime minister so much want direct action that they rail against the delays attendant upon democratic procedure. To those who view the present Government's tendencies with dismay, the association of Sir Robert Vansittart with a film that so openly questions democracy, will be given more to think about.



The film can very easily bluff one into a loose acceptance of a sentimental life of an obviously remarkable woman, but one fears, on maturer consideration, that the episodes have been selected and the facts distorted to achieve certain unspecified and certainly suspect ends.

The object of the film is to stress the bourgeois aspect of the British Royal Family; to create the feeling that the Royal Family is very much one of ourselves, weeping for the same causes, with the same social problems, so that the middle classes can feel a close identification of interests with royalty.

Victoria and Albert apparently live their life much as most middle class families would desire to do. They are patronising to the poor, patient with their rulers, the politicians, alternately affectionate and domineering to their children and definitely masters in their own house, owing allegiance to nothing but their own superiority.

Consider these attitudes closely and see how closely akin they are to a fascist policy. The fascists say, in a patronising way: "something must be done for the poor; their politicians must be liquidated; their life must be governed."

Any exhibitor who believes in No Politics on the Screen should examine carefully *Sixty Glorious Years*. For, while our London newspapers are clucking and the snob premieres of London audiences clap, there are many millions whose sentiments may be offended by the film and there may be raspberries in Wigan and Glasgow.

As a film, it is competently made. It is photographed in Glorious Technicolor and runs the whole gamut from red to pink. It smacks of big production budgets, with location shooting at Balmoral, Osborne and Buckingham Palace.

The dialogue is distinguished above the majority of British films, though, on the whole, it is delivered as dialogue and not in conversational terms.

The political personages in the film are really only lay figures, though Palmerston, in the hands of Felix Aylmer, breathes life during his speech in the House of Commons. C. Aubrey Smith, as Wellington, plays the benevolent grand-daddy typed by Lionel Barrymore in American films, and libels a hard-living, hard-drinking, tough old English soldier, who was never the fatherly old sissy of the film.

Gladstone never comes alive, and he is quite erroneously saddled with the responsibility for the death of Gordon, through a desire to show Victoria in a favourable light. Joe Chamberlain, played by Henry Hallatt, brings a note of dignity to the end of the film. He has a difficult part to play, for, sitting at a table in the House of Commons while the old Queen dies, he has to make a speech which excuses the film's ignoring the writers, the industrialists, the scientists and the doctors who built up England during the Sixty Glorious Years.

It is still difficult to reconcile Queen Victoria with the mincing Miss Neagle—who nevertheless tries desperately hard—particularly when one has in one's mind the performance of Pamela Stanley in *Victoria Regina*.

Anton Walbrook plays a very competent Albert, and makes the part credible. He reproduces with much success the woodenness of Prince Albert.

Sixty Glorious Years is a film that must be seen—for indications of our political future—for a grand production effort on the part of Wilcox and Miss Neagle, and, although there is "o'er much a-dying," it raises an air of considerable excitement in many places.

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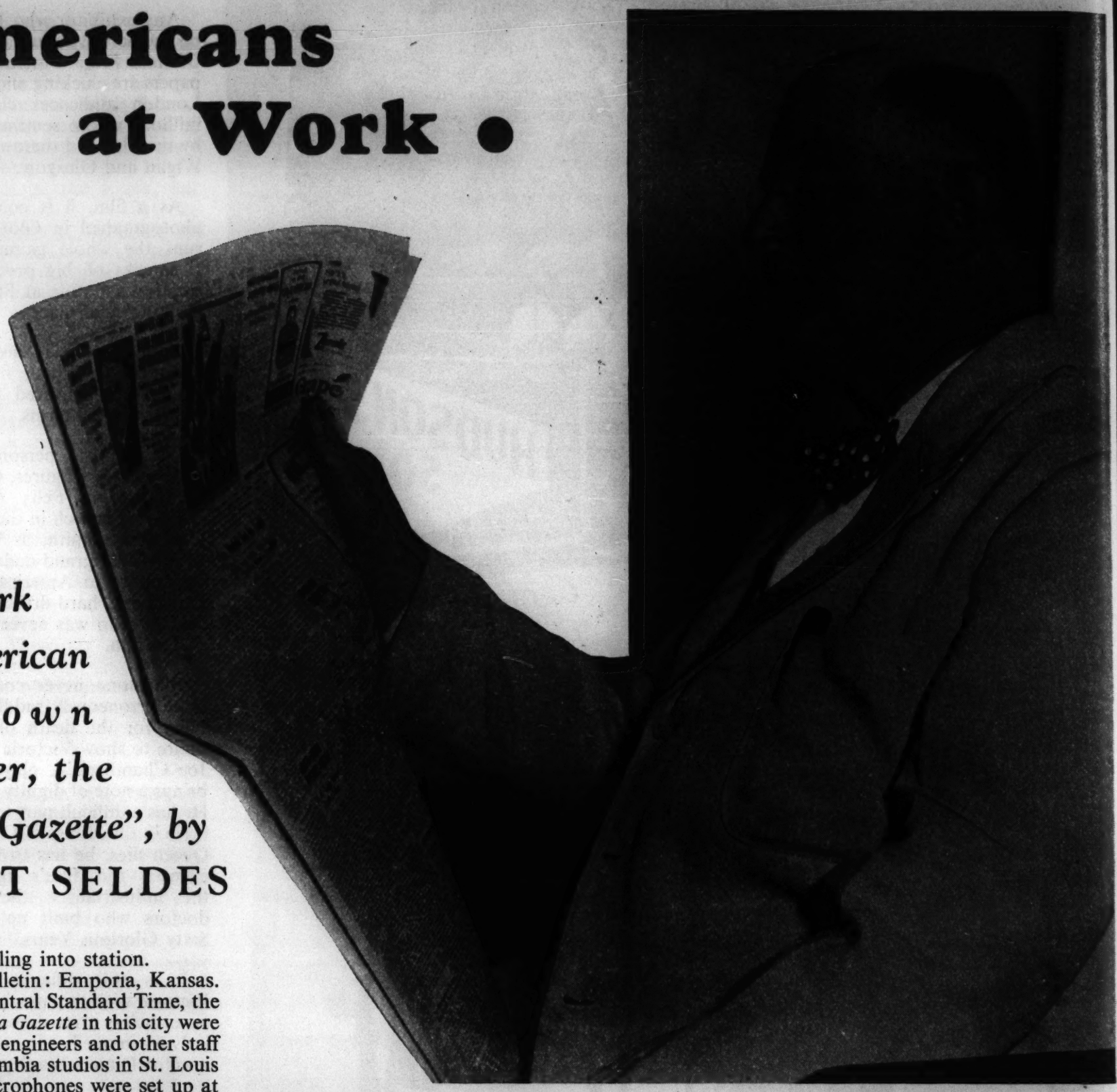
• Americans at Work •



William Allen White

A radio picture of men at work on an American small-town newspaper, the "Emporia Gazette", by GILBERT SELDES

SOUND: Train pulling into station.

VOICE: Special bulletin: Emporia, Kansas. At 8.30 to-night, Central Standard Time, the offices of the *Emporia Gazette* in this city were taken over by radio engineers and other staff members from Columbia studios in St. Louis and New York. Microphones were set up at various points in editorial and mechanical departments. The one we are now using is in the city room, with its typewriters, telephones, goose-necked lights, teletype instruments, most of them mounted on battered desks, which are typical of all newspaper offices. The purpose of coming to Emporia and invading the *Gazette* office is explained by Gilbert Seldes of Columbia's New York office.

SELDES: We had a great many good reasons for coming to Emporia, but we didn't know what we were in for. The truth is that both Harry Flannery of St. Louis, who just broadcast the bulletin, and myself have discovered that Emporia is an ideal place to visit during the hot spell. The temperature may be high in figures but it isn't hot in fact, and it's really wonderful to be in a town where the natives don't begin to complain of the heat until the thermometer hits about 105. Professionally, we came to Emporia because we want to give a picture of Americans at work getting out a small town newspaper—the men and women who make several thousand small town papers all over the country. We chose Emporia because it is a typical small town of the Midwest. Its newspaper, the *Emporia Gazette*, is without any doubt the best-known small town newspaper in the country and the reason is its editor, William Allen White, who made himself a national figure as spending forty years on Main Street. If Mr. White were not sitting right here with a dangerous glint in his eye we might tell you why he is a great editor and a great American. But he wants us to get down to the business of the broadcast, which is about his paper, and we will.

Mr. White, you once told a friend of mine that when you bought the *Gazette* you could, and did, handle all the jobs on the paper. Can you say as much now?

W. A. WHITE: I walked into this office forty-three years ago able to do any job, mechanical, reportorial or business in the *Gazette* office. To-day I'm a stranger in my own back room. Little or nothing of the printer's trade that I learned fifty years ago survives. I bought this shop for three thousand dollars. To-day a competitor could not buy the machinery, if necessary, from the *Gazette* for less than fifty thousand dollars. That the machine age has done to young men entering in life.

But on the other hand, I could hire a printer for a dollar and a half a day forty years ago, and to-day linotype operators' wages range from five to seven dollars a day in this little town. That also is the result of civilisation in a machine age. It has lessened the opportunities of the unusual man, but it certainly has raised the living standards of the average man.

SELDES: In general, on these programmes, Mr. White, we skip the boss and get down to the men on the job, but you are a working newspaper man and there is one thing you can tell us that no one else can. That is, why do you publish the *Gazette*? Here you are in

a town of about 15,000 population, surrounded by larger cities and newspapers get here promptly enough. What is the underlying purpose of publishing the paper at all?

WHITE: The small town newspaper is distinctly an American institution. I mean the paper in the town from five hundred to fifty thousand. It's almost unknown in Europe, they tell me. They're trying in Russia to encourage it, but Russia will have trouble. So the American country town paper rests entirely upon the theory of the dignity of the human spirit. It is democracy embodied. It emphasises the individual. For instance, here is an item:

John Jones is in town to-day with the first load of hay from the third cutting of alfalfa.

That item is the alpha and omega of small town journalism. It dignifies John Jones. It dignifies labour. It dignifies small business. And now, Mrs. Jones has the first forsythia out in her Emporia garden—that's a news item. We're glorifying Mrs. Jones. We're glorifying the human spirit, making the Joneses proud to be Joneses, to cut themselves hay, to have a beautiful individual garden. Upon that glorification rests the American country newspaper and, incidentally, the American democracy.

But the only way to get at the heart of a small town newspaper is to see how it's made. Now talk to Frank Glum. He gets the news in. Frank, Mr. Seldes knows about the news of a Metropolitan paper but not much about the way we handle it. Go ahead and tell him.

GLUM: Well—that is a combination country town and city newspaper (*sounds of workers in office answering telephones and typing*). Aside from the Associated Press which covers the outside world for all of us, there is one. . . .

VOICE: Pardon me, Mr. Seldes . . . there is a fellow on the phone who says he is a reader of the paper and insists that you've got to change something.

SELDES: Now, look, you tell him if he has anything to say of general interest he's still got time to get here and join a broadcast and say it here.

VOICE: Okay, Mr. Seldes.

SELDES: Look, I'm sorry, Mr. Glum, you were just trying to explain the workings of the news department. Go ahead, will you?

GLUM: All right. Many of our local society items are telephoned to the office where the person is actually involved. Then we have scattered about town many good friends to phone in items about their neighbours and friends. Frequently, they give us tips on good news stories which reporters might not find on their regular rounds. You see, we use little syndicated stuff except comic strips.

VOICE: Excuse me, Frank, what do we want on this school bond stuff?

GLUM: What's it about?

VOICE: Well, it's a statement from Fred Heath, the President of the School Board, and he says it will probably be a long time before we have another bond election. . . .

GLUM: Well, make it short, put it in quotes, we'll put it on the first page.

VOICE: Okay.

GLUM: Now, that, Mr. Seldes, is an example of my job as Managing Editor and News Editor. I'm responsible for the news that goes into the paper. I must see that the reporters cover all the places where news stories usually break, and I try to keep an eye on the happenings of the whole town.

Mr. Trippe, who is now on vacation, really is a combination City and District Editor. He edits copies of many of the local stories and handles the news coming in from the correspondents. I also have to decide how large a headline a story is to have and whether or not it is on the first page.

SELDES: Now, look, what is your biggest headline to-day?

GLUM: Well, the most important story in to-night's paper is the result of the school bond election. The town voted down two new school buildings. That's more important to us than any story happening in Washington or any place else. Not only our adult readers, but all the children are interested in those two schools. But we still print all the state and national and telegraph news. Mr. Cander can tell about that. Mr. Cander, can you tell Mr. Seldes what you think is the most important headline in to-morrow's paper?

CANDER: Something new, not connected with any story in the headlines recently always is the hope of the telegraph editor, and his news break would be preferred to developments on a current story . . . that goes for a paper of any size. Now, you take to-night's *Kansas City Star*. Their lead stories are about the Hines trial in New York, the Japanese War story.

SELDES: How does that compare with yours?

CANDER: Those are the same stories that we ran at the top of the columns in our paper to-night.

SELDES: That's very interesting . . . now, tell me, how does the telegraph editor, in general fit in on a paper that has such a profound local interest?

CANDER: The teletype and the Associated Press news, already typewritten like a telegraph—they don't need the Morse Code telegraph operators to receive and type the material. These teletypes, Mr. Seldes, bring in about 30,000 words a day; about twenty-six columns set up in type. I can use from twelve to twenty columns out of that, depending on the number of pages in the day's paper. Now, the hardest job I have is deciding what to throw away. I give preference to items of national interest, then news of special interest to Kansas. Of course a big news break abroad will sometimes overshadow local and state and national, as it does in the Metropolitan papers.

SELDES: Well, I can see that. But do you really think it's important for you to cover international news entirely?

CANDER: That's right, Mr. Seldes. The *Gazette* has accustomed its readers to this national world news. When Mr. White first bought this paper more than forty years ago, he was more interested in world affairs than the average country editor was, so he printed. The *Gazette* just naturally educated the people that way, but don't forget, we still think this local news is of more importance.

SELDES: Now, there's something. You know, the personals are considered pretty much of a joke in our Metropolitan papers.

CANDER: Yes, the Metropolitan papers are the ones who publish the gossip columns. They are nothing more than unverified personals with most of the facts left out. How would you like to look at a few of our personals?

SELDES: Let's have a look.

CANDER: Miss Taylor, will you read that Stryker's family item for Mr. Seldes?

TAYLOR: Certainly. *Mr. and Mrs. O. R. Stryker and children, James, Russell, John and Doris, have gone to Denver to see Mr. Stryker's step-father who is sick. Mr. and Mrs. Stryker were invited, but not the children, to go on a fishing trip to Michigan, but they declined the invitation so they could see Mr. Stryker's step-father and his brother, Lee Stryker, and also so the Strykers' children could have a trip.*

CANDER: Tell him why we think that's a good item.

TAYLOR: Oh, that's news here because the Stryker family is well known. He is a former county attorney and the children have many friends. It's of general interest too that Mr. and Mrs. Stryker would rather go where they can take the children than to go fishing alone.

CANDER: Tell him where you got that story.

TAYLOR: Mr. Stryker turned in an item about their Colorado vacation and a neighbour gave us the other angle.

VOICE: I beg pardon, here's that school bond story, Frank.

GLUM: Okay—pardon me, please, while I read copy on McDaniels' story on the school bond.

SELDES: Exactly what are you looking for when you read copy?

GLUM: Well, it consists of reading the story or facts, or eliminations, the writing of the headlines. Of course we always have to watch anything that might be libel or slander.

SELDES: Do you think there's any libel in that story you wrote, Mr. McDaniel?

MCDANIEL: Well, I've been in newspaper work for 13 years and they haven't got me on a libel suit yet.

SELDES: Where did you start—in the city room?

MCDANIEL: I really began as a printer's devil, but when I came on the *Gazette*, I went on the proof desk looking for mistakes and not for libel; then I went on the telegraph desk, that's Chandler's job now, and next to straight reporting and sports.

SELDES: Both at the same time?

MCDANIEL: Yes, I cover the City Hall beat, that's politics, and cover all kinds of sports.

SELDES: It's an active life. Do you enjoy it?

MCDANIEL: Yes, especially the sports angle. Of course this isn't the kind of newspaper reporting you get in the movies . . . old drunkards that make front-page scoops every day. But as a matter of fact, that isn't true of big town newspaper men either. They're on a job the same as we are.

SELDES: Now, if you had the choice, will you tell me, of becoming either a first-rate reporter in a big city, or the owner-editor of a small town paper, which would you take?

MCDANIEL: If I could be a baseball writer in a city with a big league team, that would be my first choice. But otherwise I'd rather be a small town publisher.

(*Continued on next page*)

SELDES: What do you think the chances are?

MCDANIEL: Not so good. A reporter nowadays can hardly save enough out of his salary to put up the capital for a newspaper, even in a very small town. But just as Mr. White said, forty years ago he bought the *Gazette* for $3,000. To-day the plant couldn't be duplicated for $50,000. Where are you going to get it?

SELDES: I don't know. I think that's another side of newspaper work, Bill. We've been watching the news come in and now we suddenly discover that it costs money to run a paper. Shall we ask Mr. White—do you think it's possible for a young man to start a paper now as you did 40 years ago?

WHITE: As I said a moment ago, the matter of investment marks the chief difference between yesterday and to-day. Investment and profits. My wildest dreams when I came here were to make twenty-five hundred dollars a year, forty years ago. One year not long ago, but certainly before the depression, ten or fifteen or years ago, we paid income tax here on $30,000 in a year. It wasn't all *Gazette*, the *Gazette* makes no more money, but most of it was *Gazette*—the *Gazette* makes no more money than ten or twenty other little papers in Kansas. But we're capitalists now and the old easy-going relation, half beggars and half blackmailers which was ours in the 1880's, has disappeared. We have acquired the capitalist's fishy eye. But I should say—we must be fair—and probably two-thirds of the small town press now is liberal or progressive and in Kansas I should say ninety per cent of it.

SELDES: I should say that the small town publisher has the fishy eye of the capitalist. Now, does he ever have to submit to pressure from the other capitalist? I mean, the advertisers, for instance?

WHITE: Well, now, I'm not going to answer that. Let Eugene Lauder, Manager of our Advertising Department, handle that. Eugene, come on, come over here and tell 'em about it . . . the roof's the limit, don't be afraid . . . tell the truth.

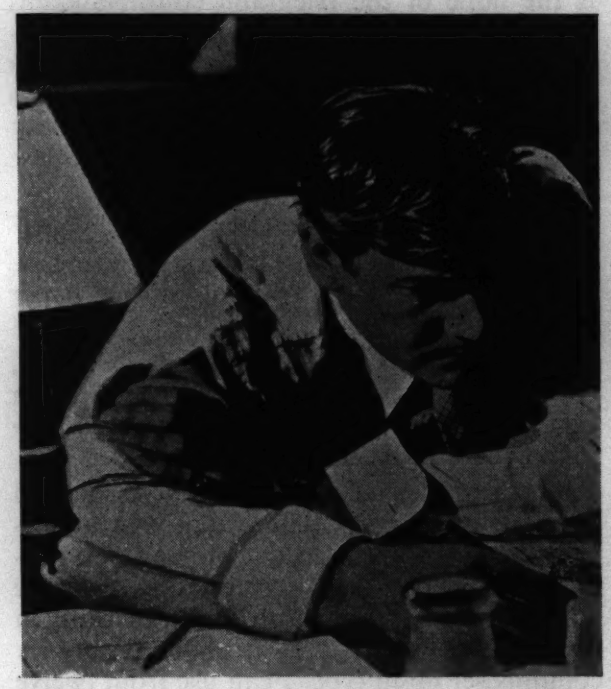
LAUDER: Well, there aren't many attempts made to put pressure on a small town paper if they advertise or know in advance it can't be done. Sometimes, though, an advertiser can't see why an item can't be kept out of the paper. For instance, some time ago some food dealers were arrested for displaying meat which fell below the requirements. Some of the dealers thought we might have left that item out. It was my job to tell them that the only reason their ads were read was because the people trusted the *Gazette*. If they lost confidence in the *Gazette*, advertising wouldn't be worth the paper it was printed on. I'll tell you what I tell 'em, Mr. Seldes. I tell them that the bell on the cash register in the advertising office is not heard back in the news and editorial rooms. We sell advertising to the local merchants. More than ninety per cent of our advertising is local and the basis on which it is sold is simply our circulation. The merchant can tell absolutely where our paper circulates by the people who come in to buy what he advertises. Have you talked to Wayne Davidson yet?

SELDES: No, I haven't. Let's ask him over. Wayne, will you tell Mr. Seldes about our circulation?

DAVIDSON: We've got, roughly, 7,500 subscribers, Mr. Seldes. Here at Emporia itself, we have more subscribers than there are water meters. People in big cities wouldn't know what that means, but we know. It means that there is a subscriber for nearly every family. To be on the safe side, we say we go into ninety-four per cent of the homes in Emporia. But we actually go to the porches. In towns like ours, newspapers never have much say over newsboys. Ours isn't more than a couple hundred a day. We have 24 boys on bicycles and they deliver the *Gazette*, not on the sidewalks, not on the front lawn but on the porch. That's where Emporia gets its news before 6 every evening.

SELDES: How about outside in the country?

DAVIDSON: Well, about half our circulation is in the surrounding territory, the towns in the rural routes and the thirty-thousand mile radius. Out there they get the paper for the same reasons as in Emporia. It is often their only paper and they want to read the ads for



bargains. But the feature is the local correspondence. About sixty of them send in local news. Were you ever a country correspondent, Mr. Seldes?

SELDES: No, that's one that I missed on my way.

DAVIDSON: Well, they tell me it's a great job, but we'd better ask Frank Glum about them.

SELDES: Yes, I was going to. Now, we've been going through the newspaper business. We heard Mr. White tell us first why such a paper as the *Gazette* is published. Then at city desk and reporters who told us how the news gets here. Mr. White again and his business managers have told us about costs and how they're met through advertising and circulation. Circulation we now see leads us right straight back to the readers and to what we want to read, the out of town correspondents. How many have you got (I think you said sixty)—are they important, Mr. Glum?

GLUM: Correspondents are very important, Mr. Seldes. We have 27 in all the towns in our territory, and we have about thirty in the rural districts. The biggest story the *Gazette* ever handled probably was the airplane crash in which Knute Rockne, the Notre Dame coach, was killed.

That happened about thirty miles from here in the hills a few years ago. Our Cottonwood Falls correspondent who is an insurance man telephoned us as soon as the plane fell. He didn't know who was on it but he had the number of the plane. I told the Associated Press in Kansas City. Right away they got the number of the ship, went out and checked the airport lists. They found Knute Rockne was on it. A few minutes later the news of Rockne's death was flashed all over the world. I think that shows how important a good rural correspondent is.

SELDES: It certainly does. But there's another type of correspondent I might ask your opinion of. I mean Constant Reader, all those who write letters to the editor.

GLUM: Well, letters to the editor—Mac, have you got any good letters lately?

MAC: I think we can find some pretty good ones. You know, Mr. Seldes, we print all the letters people write to us if they are printable. They write about everything from Czechoslovakia to mixed bathing. . . .

SELDES: There's a piece going to the composing room. I wish you'd follow that, Mr. Flannery. You see, we're getting to the final stages of newspaper work. You've heard what the function of the paper is—how its news and business departments operate, what part is played by personal relations with the reader, and one thing we haven't got is the physical newspaper itself. You see some copy which Mr. McDaniels wrote and Mr. Glum edited is now on its way to becoming type, and Mr. Flannery is following it into the composing room.

ANNOUNCER: Like every other composing room in the world, the *Emporia Gazette's* mechanical department is distinguished by three things—one you see, one you hear and one you smell. The smell is the never-mistaken odour of printer's ink, sharp and pungent and intoxicating to newspapermen as catnip is to cats. I wish we could transmit a whiff of it to you. Now, what you hear is the clatter of the linotype machines and these machines are the most conspicuous objects in the place. There are six of these superhuman monsters in the room. And they had to put a concrete floor reinforced with steel under them. The machines are a combination of typewriter and foundry. After the typewriter portion is set for type, a lead casting is made and then a great arm reaches down, grabs the type, sends the individual letters back ready to be used again while at the other end out comes one line of type after another to make a column and then the page. Half a dozen operations more or less run at the same time in a composing room, every one of them requiring an exceptional degree of skill, but in every composing room one man has to know how everything is done. He is the mechanical superin-

"This man is News" (*Paramount*)

tendent of the plant. The *Gazette* superintendent is John Jocknor. We are going to ask him to speak for the old composing room. Now first of all, Mr. Jocknor, how long have you been with the *Gazette?*

JOHN: About thirty-eight years. I started when I was about 15 as a printer's devil, you might say I never worked anywhere else. I was on the linotype for about 15 years and then on my present work. I call it foreman, but Mr. White likes to call it superintendent. Most of the other boys are just about the same, Tom Jones, for instance, who has been with us for 39 years, is now the head make-up man. Paul Chandler, who was the linotype operator, is now a telegraph editor. Gene Lowther started as a carrier boy and is now advertising manager.

ANNOUNCER: Now, I want to ask you a few questions about them. Are they all Emporia boys?

JOHN: Practically all of them. They worked up, I believe, with the *Gazette*. Yes, we train our own printers here. Start them as printer's devils, carriers, etc., and then they move on up when someone leaves, is promoted or something. This way every man who gets to be a boss knows the job of the one under him by experience.

ANNOUNCER: That makes the *Gazette* even more an Emporia newspaper. Now about the linotype. That's the most interesting machine in the composing room. How many columns of type does an average operator set on it in a day?

JOHN: Well, on an average an operator would set no more than a column of type in an hour, or 8 or 10 columns in an 8-hour day. With the linotype, we turn out about six lines of type a minute or about two columns an hour or fifteen columns a day. That's more than two solid pages. However, very few operators can do that.

ANNOUNCER: Are the linotype operators paid by the amount of type they set or according to the time they put in?

JOHN: No, they're paid by the week. They average about $35.00 a week depending upon the length of time they've been with us.

ANNOUNCER: Tell me, where's the story now that came in with us?

JOHN: Well, this copy has now been set and the proof from the galley is in the hands of the proof reader. He makes the necessary corrections and then the proof goes back to the linotype operator and then on to the make-up man.

ANNOUNCER: Let's stop at that point and ask you a little bit about that to make it a little more clear, not only for me but to those who are listening. Now, the make-up man gets this type after it's been corrected, then he puts it in print form. He not only puts that in there, but he also puts the advertisements in there. Isn't that right?

JOHN: He arranges the advertising and the reading matter—the whole thing.

ANNOUNCER: And then after that?

JOHN: Then, when the page is completed and presses are made out of the forms on soft cardboard, they are then put on the press.

ANNOUNCER: Now, again I want to ask you —that soft cardboard is called the masters— and then this masters is pressed over the type so that it has impressions in it, and then you put the type into that making stereotype, as you call it, and the mat makes the circular page. What's the idea of making the circular page ?

JOHN: Our press is set for that so they fit right on there and the type doesn't go on the press at all, just the impression of the type.

ANNOUNCER: Does that give it more speed?

JOHN: Yes, it runs just as fast as you wish.

ANNOUNCER: How fast are your presses— as fast say as most of the presses in the big cities?

JOHN: Not quite, but it will run about 20 to 25 thousand an hour.

ANNOUNCER: And in other words, you can get your run down in less than an hour. I see. Then, the paper is ready to be printed and then it's ready to be run off and then they go out to the carrier boys, I suppose. Do they come here to get your papers?

JOHN: Yes, sir.

ANNOUNCER: And then take them out and deliver it out. What time does the *Gazette* get out to them in Emporia?

JOHN: We reach most of the people in town just about 5.30. So that they can have their paper before supper.

ANNOUNCER: You have two editions, I believe.

JOHN: One at 2.30 and one at 4.0.

ANNOUNCER: And what's the 2.30 edition for?

JOHN: That's for mail.

ANNOUNCER: Now, is the press about ready?

JOHN: In fact it's ready to start now.

ANNOUNCER: Now, the press is almost ready to go.

SELDES: If they're ready to roll, that means that our time on the air is practically over. There are a couple of things we ought to tell you. First, we ought to tell you that Mr. William Allen White is probably the only business man who has a rocking chair in his office and never sits in it. It's for angry citizens who come in to protest. They sit in the rocking chair and after a few seconds, they relax and their anger is gone and Mr. White has his way. Second, we ought to say that the whole programme has been coming from the city room of the *Emporia Gazette*, Emporia, Kansas, and we are profoundly grateful to the publisher, Mr. White, and his entire staff because they've done all the work and let us sit by and listen to them. This programme is one of the Americans at Work series which is presented by Columbia's Adult Education Board, a series showing Americans at work in different occupations each week at this time.

"Americans at Work" was broadcast by the Columbia Broadcasting System of America, to whom we are indebted for permission to publish this extract. . . .

SIWA...

Ancient Desert Fastness filmed for the first time. An account of the film unit's adventures, by RONALD STRODE.

Stills from "Siwa—the Fastness of the Desert."

ALTHOUGH it seemed that the newsreels, travelogue producers, documentary film makers, *and* Mr. James Fitzpatrick had been over the Atlas with a microscope, there is at least one spot they have overlooked—Siwa, the ancient Oasis of Jupiter Ammon, mentioned in the writings of Herodotus.

It was left to the initiative of Mr. James Hamilton Black and Victor Stoloff, the well-known Russian director, to provide a record of this isolated outpost set in the heart of the Western Desert of Egypt.

Siwa was first connected with Egypt about the sixteenth century B.C., and in the twelfth century it was colonised by Rameses III. The original deity of the Oasis is said to have been a Sun God, probably in the form of a bull; it was supported by a powerful and barbarous cult. So great was its reputation that it was visited by Kings, Princes and wise men of the ancient world, including Croesus and Alexander the Great, who was invested with Divine honours and proclaimed to be the Son of Jupiter.

During the Persian invasion of Egypt in 525 B.C., Cambyses, King of Persia, sent an

army of 50,000 men from Luxor across the desert to sack Siwa and wreck the shrine of Jupiter Ammon. They never arrived there and were never seen or heard of again. They are supposed to have been engulfed in a raging sandstorm and the whole army to have perished of thirst: no trace of them has ever been discovered.

The present population of Siwa consists of about 4,000 persons of Berber origin, and their manners, language and customs, which are entirely different from those of the Egyptians and the Arabs, remain practically unaltered from the time the town was first founded, owing to its remoteness and its lack of communication with the outer world.

When Hamilton Black and Victor Stoloff first conceived the idea of making a documentary feature of Siwa they had to obtain special permission from the Egyptian Government.

Before writing the script Mr. Stoloff spent six weeks in Siwa studying the lives and customs of the natives, out of which he built up a connected story, and after his return to Cairo the unit, headed by Victor Stoloff (director), James Hamilton Black (producer), set out on the arduous journey of over 350 miles across the desert.

Heavy rain added to the difficulty of the trip which took more than double the time expected, and as bad weather persisted during the whole time the unit was in Siwa, "shooting" took seven weeks instead of the three weeks scheduled. This was a serious matter as they had to take their own food supplies, which ran out half way through the stay, necessitating a native diet.

A number of difficulties arose, apart from the weather, such as the impossibility of getting girls to act in the film owing to the strict Moslem codes which are still observed, and the prevalence of snakes, scorpions and white ants which destroy anything not encased in metal.

THE film *Siwa . . . the Fastness of the Desert*, which will shortly be shown in London, is a three reeler, and its story tells of a feud between two owners of date groves over the ownership of a palm tree that has grown in the middle of a path between their groves.

Many of the customs and superstitions of the Siwans are introduced into the film. On nearly every house a skull of a donkey is hung as the natives have an inherent fear of evil spirits and the skulls are believed to ward off the 'evil eye'. All the donkeys carry round their necks a little bag containing charms for the same purpose.

When a Siwan dies, his widow or 'ghoula' goes into mourning for four months and ten days. During this period she keeps to her house, only going out at night, as anyone who meets or sees her or is seen by her is believed to incur a terrible curse. When a 'ghoula' walks abroad, the whole town is filled with warning cries: "Beware of the ghoula". All bolt inside their houses and other places where they are safe from meeting her.

The difficulty that the unit had in showing a 'ghoula' can be imagined. Eventually after a long search a woman was found who was willing to act the role, but it was impossible to persuade others to appear as her escort, so that difficulty was overcome by using men dressed as women. Great care had to be taken to keep this a secret, otherwise the men would have been the object of scorn and derision.

Mr. Hamilton Black was surprised at the acting abilities of the natives and although most of them had never seen a film in their lives they proved apt pupils, the star performer being a young Siwan, Ismail, who bears a striking resemblance to Sabu, of *Elephant Boy* fame.

The undeveloped negative was sent from Siwa by road, rail and air to Paris for processing and editing. The Siwan songs, dances and dialogue were sound-recorded in Cairo, and the orchestral music has been written by Paul Dessan in Paris, and recorded there on Western Electric. Because the negative was processed in Paris it was not possible for the unit to see the rushes, but in spite of this perfect continuity has been obtained as the result of a good script and able directing.

The film was presented in Paris at the Musée de l'Homme, Trocadero, in October, with the Egyptian Minister presiding, and a pre-view will shortly be taking place in London.

London Scientific Film Society

The L.S.F.S. has been founded to bring to a wider audience films which interpret the modern world. The programmes will include leading scientific, sociological and documentary films from Great Britain and abroad.

The first performance of the Society is on Sunday, November 13th, at the Academy Cinema, 165 Oxford Street, London, at 2.30 p.m.

Normandie
Sea Urchin
Oil from the Earth
How the Motor Works
$\ddot{X} + X = O$
Seed Dispersal by Wind
We Live in Two Worlds

Membership costs 10/- or 15/- a season and secures admission to at least four Sunday performances. Application for membership and guest tickets should be made to The Secretary, London Scientific Film Society, 28 Hogarth Road, London S.W.5. Flaxman 3258.

Only members and their guests can be admitted. No tickets will be issued at the door.

"Come Out Fightin

these men nothing will be left b eir

Cinema Screen, writes STAN PAT TI

CLIFFORD ODETS experienced the same trouble with his *Golden Boy* as does L. A. G. Strong in his new book *Shake Hands and Come Out Fighting* (Chapman & Hall, 10s. 6d.). His fighters are a trifle too secondhand to be real. But Mr. Strong, like Mr. Odets, is at his best when writing about ordinary people—his own people. He breathes life into his pugilistic puppets when telling of the struggles and ambitions of preliminary boys.

In his introduction he states a fact we already know too well, that with few exceptions novelists' descriptions of fights and fighters are unsatisfactory. For the exceptions he points to Jack London's already famous story, *A Piece of Steak* and the writings of Robert Westerby, James Curtis and Michael Fessier. I would like to add Ernest Hemingway's *Fifty Grand*, easily the greatest fight story ever written.

Hollywood fight films are often difficult to believe, but now and again somebody digs down under the camera angles and produces a little masterpiece like Jimmy Cagney's *Winner Take All* and Max Baer's swaggering *Prizefighter and The Lady*.

Speaking of the great upset when the 35-year-old Fitzimmons flattened the world's champion, James J. Corbett, the referee's summary was perfect:

"Corbett," he said, "easily outboxed Fitzimmons. Fitzimmons indisputably outfought Corbett."

The Tommy Burns—Jack Johnson fight gets a chapter to itself. I know Hugh D. McIntosh, the man who promoted and refereed it, very well. I was present at the fight, aged three, perched on my father's shoulder, while my mother worried her heart out at home thinking that the blood and brutality might have its effect on me in future years. My father, along with thousands of others who were present at the fight, was there to see the Black Menace knocked off his cocky throne. I'm told I lisped "Beat 'im Tommy!" at the top of my shrill voice.

But Tommy Burns, who was a squat little fellow looking more like a welter than a heavyweight, couldn't have beaten Johnson with a horseshoe in his glove—he just wasn't big enough (or good enough) for the job. In a way, it was like Peter Kane fighting Max Baer.

Johnson humbled the great Jim Jefferies next.

There's a story about Jim Jefferies, not told in the book, that gives a revealing slant on the early film business. The Jefferies—Sharkey fight, at the Coney Island Athletic Club on the night of November 1, 1899, was one of the first full-length fight pictures ever taken by a movie camera.

The fight, which was no better than a barroom brawl, went 25 rounds to a decision with Jefferies a disputed winner on points.

Powerful arc-lights were placed over the ring and Jefferies, who was noted for his terrible tempers, swore up hill and down dale that the lights had very nearly cost him the fight.

"I was almost roasted to death," roared the champion at his manager.

Tom Sharkey, who had taken a terrible beating about the body, was carried from the ring and taken straight home from the arena and was actually forced to stay in bed for two months.

Meanwhile, the company who had bought the exclusive film rights of the fight had failed to register it at the U.S. Patent Office and were absolutely stumped when a rival company came out with a bootleg version of the same thing.

After several conferences it was decided that the smart thing to do would be to stage the last round of the fight all over again—change the action of it slightly so that it differed from the bootleg version—then they would be able to get a copyright.

Sharkey, still black and blue from his beating, was hauled out of bed and hustled to the arena. Jefferies was already there, stripped to the buff and roaring for the celluloid fray, but there were no spectators and the night of the real fight had seen the arena packed to the rafters. Scouts were sent out to drag people in from the highways and by-ways, and with Bill Brady, Jim Jefferies' manager, impersonating the referee, the strange scene was filmed.

Jess Willard is given the credit he deserves for his 25-round-knockout over Jack Johnson. The often published picture of the finish, with Jack Johnson lying on his back shielding his eyes from the sun, merely proves that the negro had had enough and was taking the

. . ." When the last gong goes for
heir shadows, flickering across the
TT, reviewing new book on boxing

(*Associated British Press*)

easy way out. Big Jess was punching hard that broiling day in Havana.

ENTER Jack Dempsey, the greatest fighter who ever pulled on a glove. Willard crumples like the Hindenburg line under the withering fire of his attack.

The boxing scene moves to Europe where Georges Carpentier is humbling the best that England has to offer. Beckett, Bombardier Billy Wells and George Cook go down before the flashing rapier attack of the Orchid Man.

The stage is all set for the first of the million-dollar fight gates—Dempsey *v.* Carpentier for the Heavyweight Championship of the World, war veteran *versus* the champion who had been branded "slacker" by U.S. ex-servicemen, all the ingredients of a showmanship "natural."

It took Dempsey exactly three-and-a-half rounds to prick the Carpentier bubble. The soldier of France put everything he had into a right-hand punch that landed inches too high, then collapsed under a machine gun burst of leather that cut him down like wheat before a cutter.

Gene Tunney came next. Dempsey, his legs gone and his dazzling speed impaired, was beaten by a boxing robot who had planned every punch months before the articles for the fight were signed.

Smarting under the bitter gall of defeat, Dempsey snarled for a return and the fight took place at Soldier's Field, Chicago, on the night of September 22, 1927.

I was there. I gave up my job in Los Angeles, bought a round-trip ticket to Chicago and bet what was left on Dempsey to win. I knew Jack slightly through hanging around the down-town gymnasium where he trained, and this soft-spoken giant who never forgot a face and never refused help to a hungry man had given me a bad case of hero-worship.

Nothing would convince me that Jack wasn't robbed that night, but I've changed my opinion since. Any one of the four punches that dropped Tunney for the famous long count would have knocked a man out in the past, but the fire had gone from Dempsey. Years, and the thousand-and-one worries that go with being champion had aged him almost overnight and he went down to defeat like the man he was, patiently plodding forward against a boxing machine that beat him to the punch every time.

Everyone knows of the scene after the fight when the half-blinded Dempsey whispered to his ever-faithful trainer, Jerry the Greek: "Take me over to the champ, Jerry; I want to congratulate him!"

THIS scene has a parallel in the story of the time the great Black Panther, Harry Wills, in his prime, was matched in New Orleans with another great negro fighter, Sam Langford, then well in his forties.

The fight went the distance and Wills won handily on points. Afterwards it was revealed by Langford's second that old Sam had said to him when the bell rang for the first round: "Point me at him, son, point me at him." Langford was practically stone blind and had taken on Wills—the man whom Dempsey had refused to fight—to get money for an operation to his eyes. Like the great-hearted Stanley Ketchel he feared no man living.

The arena lights dim and brighten again. Tunney retires and sailor Jack Sharkey is the new champion. Max Schmeling, the Black Uhlan, wins the title for Germany, on a foul in 4 rounds, only to lose it back to Sharkey two years later.

Pituitary Primo Carnera, the glandular gladiator, sinks Sharkey under a sea of punches. Max Baer, the Livermore Larruper, comes out of the West to batter Primo with a series of roundhouse rights that can be felt in far-off Italy.

Then Cinderella man, James J. Braddock, who had been fighting since 1926, defeats Max Baer in 15 rounds and the new champion defends his title against young black Joe Louis, who had already kayoed the swaggering Baer, in what had been aptly described by Ernest Hemingway as a "Million Dollar Fright," and so we come to the present day with Glass-Jawed Louis still champion after shattering Schmeling in one terrible round and Max Baer and Tommy Farr waiting on the sidelines for just one more chance.

When the last gong goes for these men nothing will be left but their shadows flickering across the cinema screen, for one generation to say to the next—"These were *men*—their dust is made of thunderbolts."

CENSORSHIP and the DOCUMENTARY

by John Grierson

THE position of the documentary film is more intriguing to-day than I have known it. With its insistence on authenticity and the drama that resides in the living fact, the documentary film has always been in the wars. To-day, as the forces of propaganda close round it, the battle for authenticity becomes more arduous than ever.

Not so long ago, the materials of steel and smoke were not considered "romantic" enough for pictures, and the documentary film was supposed to be engaged on a sleeveless errand. To-day, people find industry and the skills that reside within it, magical and exciting. But it was relatively easy to find the beauty in the lives of fishermen and steel workers. Their dramatic atmosphere was ready-made. Documentary moved on to more difficult work when it proceeded to dramatise the daily activities of great organisations (*B.B.C.*, *The Voice of Britain*, 6.30 *Collection*, *Weather Forecast*, *A Job in a Million*, *Night Mail*, etc.). It was a unique achievement when, in *Big Money*, it made a fine, exciting story of the Accountant General's Department of the Post Office—surely, on the face of it, one of the dullest subjects on earth.

Behind the three or four hundred documentaries that have now been made in Britain, there has been this constant drive to attack new materials and bring them into visual focus on the screen. Clerks and other suburban figures were more difficult to present than fishermen and steel workers, till the documentary men got the hang of the work they did and begin to understand how to attach the importance of the great public organisations they operated to the seeming dullness of their daily darg. All this meant time, research, and getting accustomed to human materials which had never been creatively treated before.

Yet, I think the greatest advance of all came with two little films which, except among the far-seeing, went almost unnoticed. One was

called *Housing Problems* and the other *Workers and Jobs*. I think I am right in saying that the credit of the first goes to John Taylor whose first film it was. The second was Arthur Elton's. They took the documentary film into the field of social problems, and keyed it to the task of describing not only industrial and commercial spectacle but social truth as well.

These simple films went deeper than earlier films like *Drifters* and later films like *Night Mail* and *North Sea*. They showed the common man, not in the romance of his calling, but in the more complex and intimate drama of his citizenship. See *Industrial Britain*, *Night Mail*, *Shipyard* and *North Sea* alongside *Housing Problems*. There is a precious difference. More poignant and, indeed, more classical, is *Housing Problems*. It is not so well made nor so brilliant in technical excitements, but something speaks within it that touches the conscience. These other films "uplift." *Housing Problems* "transforms" and will not let you forget.

I have watched the various documentary men come to that point of distinction. They know that a thousand easy excitements lie right to their hand. They could engage themselves in brilliant exercises in technique, and a dozen I could name could out-Bolshevik the Bolsheviks and out-Nazi the Nazis in high fallutin parades against the sky line. But they do not do it. *Housing Problems* was a marker of where they wanted to go and, shunning the meretricious attractions of the easy excitements, they have kept to their line.

The powerful sequence of films which have appeared during the past three years about nutrition and housing and health and education are the measure of their achievement. Significantly enough, the big films this year hardly deviate into the "epic" of industry at all. They are *The Londoners*, a film describing London's fifty years of local government; the G.P.O. film on national health; *New Worlds for Old*, Rotha's discussion of the public utility of the fuel resources; and the films of economic reconstruction, education and agriculture, made in Scotland.

These films of social reconstruction and the growing points thereof have become a powerful force for the public good. They have found their place in the cinemas; they have a vast audience outside the cinemas; they are attracting more and more attention and prestige abroad. Other countries make documentaries, but no documentary movement anywhere is so deliberately constructive in public affairs, or has so many powerful national allies as ours. Above all, its continuous and unremitting description of Britain's democratic ideals and work within those ideals, has a special pertinence at the present time.

THIS policy is not popular in all quarters. Though the Minister of Health expressed publicly the other day his gratitude for the Nutrition film, it is wise to remember that when that film was first made, it was branded by political busy-bodies as "subversive." Silly enough it sounds, but obstacle after obstacle has been put in the way of the documentary film whenever it set itself to the adult task of performing a public service. Sometimes it came in the cry of the Censor that the screen was to be kept free of what was called "controversy." More often, it has been in the whispered obstruction emanating from party politicians.

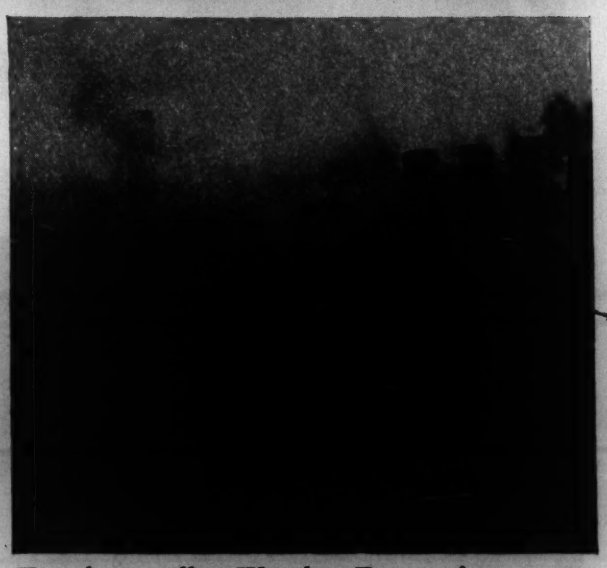
For the documentary men, whose vision has sought to go beyond party politics to a deeper sort of national story altogether, the path has not been comfortable. It has taken a good deal of persistence to maintain that a full and true story of British life is more likely to describe our virtues as a democracy, and the richest picture to present in this and other countries.

Whatever flamboyant pictures come from other countries, we can present films that are of the bone and substance of British life to-day.

In many of the documentary films, the country is shown tearing down slums and building anew, or facing up to unemployment and reorganising economically: in general, passing from the negative to the positive. The key to the strength of the films is that they are continuously bent on breaking down and building up, and passing from the negative to the positive. It is in this, precisely, that most of us have felt that the strength of this democratic country is made manifest.

Yet I fear one thing. The unofficial censorships have sought to embarrass this honest picture of Britain which we have now partially achieved, and have been anxious to substitute for the heartfelt interpretation of responsible artists the synthetic lie of partisan interests. There is always the similar danger that they will seek, in presenting Britain abroad, to show only the superficial and bombastic elements in the British scene. No country is greater in tradition and ceremonial than Britain, and we may well be proud of it. Fine pictures might be made of it, and there is no documentary man who would not wish to join in making them. One would protest, however, if the ceremonial of Britain were made the be-all and the end-all of our picture abroad. Of itself, it would be an unsubstantial and even silly meal for intelligent foreigners. The growing monotony of Bolshevik propaganda three or four years ago, and the monotony of Nazi and Fascist propaganda to-day are ample evidence of that.

I sum up the matter by saying that if we are to describe the panoply of power and forget the living, working, everyday Britisher in the process of projection, our picture will be both false and, from the point of view of international relations, foolish. People of goodwill, and the wiser heads of the state, will, I am sure, keep that truth before them, and resist distortion. As for the documentary men, they have been fighting synthetic nonsense all their lives. By their very principles, they cannot be a party to false witness.



Top three stills: 'Weather Forecast'.
Above: 'The Face of Britain'.

FEAR!

" Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs " (*R.K.O. Radio*)

EVERY investigation into the effect of films on children reveals some element of fright or fear. In dealing with this, it is more than necessary to preserve a balanced judgment. The word "fear" suggests nightmares leading via mental derangement to a lunatic asylum. The topic can easily become a bogey which holds up a few neurotic children as examples of the whole mass of a younger generation. Almost any honest adult between 20 and 25 years of age can recollect an early visit to a cinema where an incident produced a "fright". The memory is clear, but the adult in question is reasonably sane and well-balanced. Therefore in accepting the following opinions, the influence of fear should be regarded almost as an inevitable baptism to regular film-going.

One of the Payne Trust investigators states, "the experience of fright, horror, or agony as a result of witnessing certain kinds of motion pictures seems common from the accounts of children and of high-school and college students. The experience is most conspicuous in the case of children. Its manifestations vary from shielding the eyes at crucial scenes during the showing of the pictures to nightmares and terrifying dreams, including sometimes experience of distinct shock, almost of neurotic proportions."[1]

[1] 1928. U.S.A. "Motion Pictures and Youth." W. W. Charters.

The power of the film to frighten young children is the subject of this authoritative article by RICHARD FORD.

The Managers of 142 Cinemas were asked to detail the film-incidents causing fear to children, and their answers are here summarized.

★ ★ ★

The London teachers who reported to the L.C.C. in 1932 were also insistent on the extent of fright. "In one school 117 out of 213 children confessed to being frightened and 178 out of 213 admitted unpleasant dreams as a result. The younger children are frightened chiefly by ghosts, the older by mystery."[2]

"Do the pictures ever frighten you?" was a question asked to 923 elementary schoolchildren in Birkenhead.[3] The replies: No, 465; Yes, 148. Sometimes, 298.

THE element of fear is officially recognized as undesirable. For this reason the Board of Censors have lately invented a Horrific Category—'H'—to label certain films and to prohibit persons under sixteen from seeing them. Local authorities sometimes supplement this ruling by prohibiting certain films altogether, or by increasing the strength of the category from 'U' to 'A', or from 'A' to 'H'.[4]

The recent release of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* provides an illustration. The British Film Censor awarded the film an 'A' certificate, on the grounds (presumably, but not expressed, of course) that certain scenes would be frightening for children. This decision was supported by Dr. Susan Isaacs, the Child Development authority at the Institute of Education, who wrote to *The Times:*

> I have recently had a delightful hour-and-a-half with *Snow White*, and would agree that it is a splendid entertainment for any ordinary child over seven or eight years. But the detailed horrors and gruesome setting of the Queen's transformation into the witch, and her end, are far too realistic for the younger child.
>
> It is quite true that, even at these ages, children love blood and thunder, and are ruthless in their own moralities; but what is actually seen is apt to be far more real and far more compelling to the younger child than what he imagines for himself. Grimm's own words are comparatively bare and conventional, leaving the child free to fill them out with his own images, according to his own psychological bent. In contrast, the dramatic and realistic resources of Disney's technique are so magnificent and so compelling that the child who has only recently learnt to distinguish between what is real and what is imagined may well be shaken to his depths. I would strongly urge that parents should err on the safe side and not take children of less than seven or eight to see *Snow White*.

The opinions of the film critics on this point were interesting:

The Times: "The idea, which some have had, that *Snow White* is in any part unsuitable for children is incomprehensible."

News Chronicle: "I can see the Censor's reasons for ruling originally that children should not see it alone. There are sensitive ages at which they are liable to be frightened by the clutching trees.

"There should be grown-ups to assure them at harrowing moments that happy things are ahead for all the good people."

Daily Express: "When *Snow White* runs through the forest with the brambles plucking at her frock with bony fingers, the results are quite terrifying."

Daily Mail: "I do agree with the British Board of Film Censors in having given this film an Adult Certificate."

Daily Telegraph: After describing various incidents, the critic writes: "It is true that such things have always been part of the Grimms' nursery tale. On the screen, however, they acquire a nightmarish power which explains the Censor's view that *Snow White* is not a film for the unaccompanied child."

Nevertheless, the film was granted a 'U' certificate in the London area, in the surrounding counties, and in a large proportion of towns and districts elsewhere.

It is sometimes not easy to ascertain exactly when children are frightened. It is very rare for a child to leave a cinema during the performance. The verdict of one cinema manager after talking to the Children's Committee of his Mickey Mouse Club is worth quoting:

> A vote was taken as to the most popular type of film, and out of 17, 6 voted for Crime and Detection. I was rather astounded to see such a large proportion in favour of Crime and Detective subjects. When I said to them: "Surely this kind of film is rather frightening", several of the members immediately replied, "Oh, no". Then I said, "What about all the shrieking that I hear sometimes?" The reply was, "That is not because we are frightened but because we are excited and cannot prevent ourselves from doing it."

In the writer's experience, there is usually a tense hush when children are frightened during a film, and they hold their breath, with small restrained squeaks, while they grip the edge or arm of the seat. The noise of healthy screaming during a chase scene is entirely different.

IN a questionnaire sent to 142 cinema Managers who are responsible for special children's matinees in the Odeon and associated Cinema Theatres, two questions concerning child fear were asked. The first concerned Cartoons, the second Serials, both of which are shown regularly at these children's matinees.

Eighty-three per cent of the Managers stated that the children were *never* frightened by incidents in cartoons.

Sixty-one per cent of the Managers stated that the children were *never* frightened by incidents in serials.

Therefore, in perusing the following examples of incidents which have caused fear, the reader must bear in mind that they are provided by a considerable minority of the Managers in charge of children's matinees in the group investigated—the largest group of children's matinees in this country.

The following are verbatim comments supplied by the 17 per cent of Managers who considered that children were occasionally frightened by cartoons:

At times when a monster chases victim or a repulsive close-up is screened.
Very young children do not like big ferocious faces brought up large on the screen.
Close-ups of horrible characters.
Where ugly faces and animals are gradually enlarged until they take up the whole of the screen.
Only by extremely gruesome or grotesque figures.
Spiders, bats, etc.
When an ugly character is brought from normal to close-up.
Ultra grotesque.
Gruesome effects.
Occasionally as in *Pluto's Judgment Day*.
Close-up of cat's open mouth as in *Pluto's Judgment Day*.
Close-ups of grotesque animals with big teeth.
Sadistic and suffering sequences.

(*Continued on page* 309)

[2] School Children and the Cinema. L.C.C. 1932.

[3] "The Cinema and the Child." Birkenhead. 1931.

[4] The Surrey Licensing Authority has given *Her Jungle Love* an 'H' category for instance.

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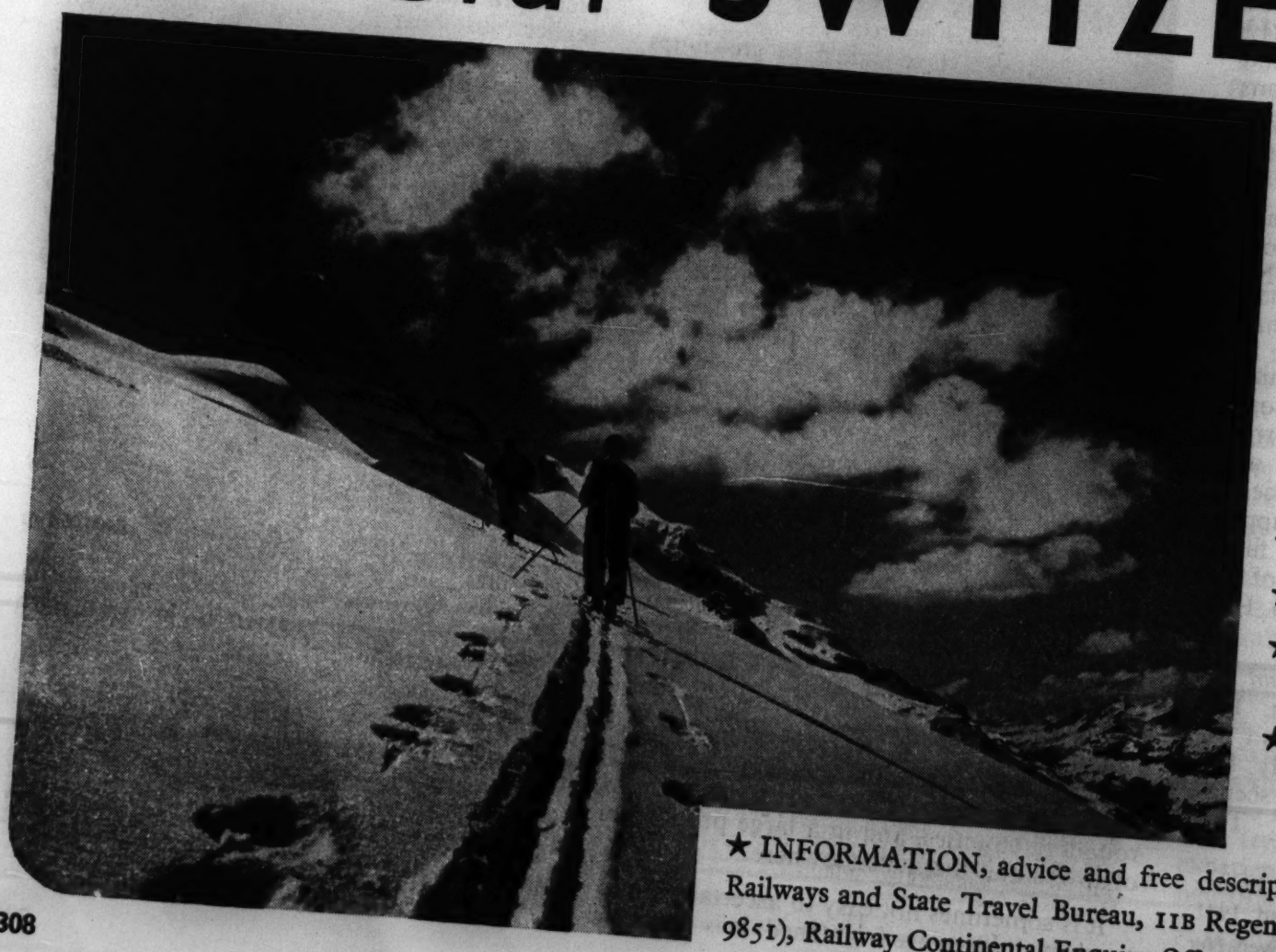

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FEAR!—*continued*

Face close-ups of spiders and gorillas, etc.
Insect cartoons occasionally frighten the very small child.
Ogre close-ups. Fantastic and frightening animals. Thunder and lightning.
Not exactly frightened; but the court scene in *Pluto's Judgment Day* was disliked intensely.
I have known some of the younger ones to be rather scared by some of the more terrifying Disney characters.
Only momentarily on close-ups of the villains' faces.
Never really frightened. The usual gasps are heard when anything grotesque, such as an enormous spider, is shown, but this type of scene is invariably received as part of the picture.
The youngest ones by the portrayal of ogres, spiders, etc.
Only when Robber Cat appears in the cartoons, and little ones afraid of *Pluto's Judgment Day*.
Very occasionally, by close-ups of weird spiders.
Horrific animals.
Several Disney Cartoons—*Donald and Pluto* and *Modern Inventions*, have Machiavellian incidents which to many children are frightening. This fear subsequently gives way to sympathy for the victim, so that Donald Duck is liked on a basis of tragedy rather than comedy.

HERE are some comments by Managers revealing *What type of incident in Serials causes fear among children.*

Scenes where bodily harm or death is threatened. Scenes of violence. On the other hand they revel in fights as depicted in Westerns.
Running from wild animals, or victim being threatened by approaching danger in form of oncoming train, car or savages.
The fiercer type of shooting scenes, and scenes in which heroes or heroines suffer too obviously.
When the hero or heroine is about to suffer in some way.
Not frightened, but apprehensive. Show tremendous concern over delicate and dangerous situations.
When hero or heroine is suffering or in danger of suffering pain or torture.
By the grotesque; anything gruesome such as grisly murders, cruelty by the villain to child stars, or by particularly evil-faced villains.
Incidents with hero or heroine in danger.
When a large animal attacks anyone.
Only in cases of extreme knife incidents.
A gruesome type of villain creeping up on someone.
For instance in *Ace Drummond* when a man was being crushed by contraction of walls.
Villain in cloak, hood, etc. Little girls dislike rough men in dirty clothes and beards.
Leaping animals, not necessarily at each other, but primarily at human beings.
Horrific scenes and weird apparitions. Scenes of cruelty.
The younger type do not like close-ups of faces or animals and trains seemingly rushing out upon them.
The Claymen in *Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars.*
Chinese villains.
The Claymen coming out of the wall in *Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars.*
The serial *Flash Gordon* provides many such incidents. Fire-spouting dragons, etc.
Only by over-accentuated horror.
I would not venture to say frightened so much as excited. This happens when one person creeps up upon another. I have noticed children scream, bite fingers, etc.
Sometimes girls and younger boys, by shooting or violent incidents.
Anything giving a ghostly effect, such as an apparently disembodied hand appearing from the wall, as in *The Clutching Hand.*
Where suspense is over-emphasised and the hero or heroine is being trapped, especially in the dark.
Sudden explosions.
No matter what film is showing some children sit out in the lounge. Some excuse themselves by saying that they don't feel well; others frankly admit to fear. Incidents that frighten—noise, torture, fighting—the last is confined mostly to girls.
At times three or four younger members come out into the vestibule during shooting or killing scenes.
Careful observation shows no genuine fear, but many instances of "pretend" fear, when hero is to be shot, etc.
The "shots" leading to the end of a part or episode.
Aerial duels.
Hero falling over cliff and such episodes affecting the hero. The smaller children are sometimes frightened by shooting scenes, knife throwing, etc.
Anything ghostly in any film will frighten younger children.
Scenes of torture.
When hero is about to be attacked by someone who can be seen slowly creeping towards him.
Monster animals in *Flash Gordon.* Only two children have left in two years through being frightened.
Chasing with guns.
Ugly Chinese characters. Scenes of torture.
Ghostly incidents.
Attack on unsuspecting hero or heroine.
Death of animals. Gruesome incidents, such as branding or whipping.
Soldiers flying with wings.
Particularly villainous make-ups. Close-ups of killings, such as knife stabs, etc.
Gigantic monsters of the type that appear in *King Kong.*
People trapped by fire.
By cannon firing, as in *The Mounties are Coming.* Rifle or revolver fire does not worry them.
Hand-to-hand fighting or any eerie subject, as in *The Clutching Hand.*
Usually the scene leading up to the climax on eposide ending.
The Clutching Hand: screams in the dark.
Younger members are sometimes frightened by the end of a serial.
Very young girls sometimes frightened by rifle or revolver shots.
Prehistoric animals as portrayed in *Flash Gordon*, but nevertheless serial proved very popular.
Beating. Cruelty in any form. Shooting. Horrific animals.
Shooting or fighting scenes, if too vivid.

An Odeon Mickey Mouse Club

Basil Wright Reviews St. MARTIN'S LANE and FLASH-BACKS

St. Martin's Lane is a throwback to the deep glamour of the Golden Days of the German Cinema; the genius of Pommer, the Pommer who pushed Dupont into fame and made even mediocre directors appear very good, here re-creates the old nostalgic atmosphere. And, let's face it, the terrific power of the German films was not that supreme feeling of reality, that marvellously aesthetic interpretation of the genuinely sordid, over which we enthused so indiscriminately. It was something much simpler and far less high-falutin'. It was, for the most part, pure sob-stuff and melodrama presented with a passionate determination to relate it to the intimate details of the ordinary. The Americans, wily birds that they are, realized early on that to make a success of this needed something near genius, and therefore never adopted it as production policy; they merely pinched the geniuses from Germany and squeezed the poor so-and-sos so dry that they either gave it up altogether or took the easier course of turning out made-to-measures. The Germans, on a recipe which depended on more Aristotelian canons, and, incidentally on a diet which regurgitated a Hitler, made great films for a short time, and faded. Of their number only Fritz Lang remains, and you could not find a finer exception to prove a depressing rule.

But now comes Pommer, up to his old tricks again, and disturbing our long-smothered pre-Talkie egos. In Laughton he finds another Jannings. (Like Jannings, Laughton acts a lot with his back, which must be maddening for the rest of the cast.) In Tim Whelan he has found a perfect protegé; in Clemence Dane a writer in the direct *Vaudeville* tradition. The result is that *St. Martin's Lane* is a profoundly disturbing and curiously impressive film. It is disturbing in its horrible story—Jannings–Pagliacci—and impressive in its treatment. The sets, for instance, reveal an attention to detail which never defeats itself by prissiness, and are moreover, infused with a sinister atmosphere which, in the true Germanic style, clashes in a menacing manner with whatever slight gaiety may from time to time be going on. The lighting is the best ever achieved in a British film.

The story tells how Charles Laughton, a busker, or entertainer of theatre queues (ably played by Mr. Charles Laughton), adopts a poor homeless waif (Vivien Leigh) who has a talent for dancing. The girl is a selfish, dishonest, unscrupulous bitch, and as soon as he has fallen in love with her while arranging a new street turn she pops off to a meteoric career of stardom as the mistress of a show bloke (Rex Harrison).

Whereupon our Laughton turns onto us the full battery of his superb acting technique and goes to the dogs; this involves reciting Kipling to a magistrate, and again subsequently at a big rehearsal, where he realizes at last that the best thing is to go back to busking.

Good to the heels the well-worn slipper feels,
When the tired player shuffles off the buskin.
A page of Hood may do a fellow good
After a scolding from Carlyle or Ruskin.

Laughton is an actor of terrific talent. As with Jannings, the majestic landscape of his features can never be disguised; and, also, as with Jannings, he has a persuasion of voice and gesture which creates the necessary illusion. As a screen actor he has only one major fault—he reminds you constantly that he is well aware that you are watching; whereas a great star like Gary Cooper never knows you are there. But for all that his performance in *St. Martin's Lane* is the best he has ever given; there is more open flame, and less smouldering; the Cockney accent is genuine, not assumed; and the pathos is not overdone.

But it is Pommer's film. His trade-mark is everywhere—in the vast empty house where the girl dances across the shadows with her stolen cigarette case; in the neat squalor of the busker's attic; in the finely drawn picture of the lodging house keeper and his family, who have nothing to do with the plot and yet, with a curious dignity give the film a validity it would otherwise lack; and in the controlled exactitude of the street scenes. Maybe the cinema has not travelled so far since 1920, after all.

How far indeed have we travelled. In *Flashbacks* we see a very early drama during which the bereaved mother walks, in full evening dress, into the ocean which has snatched her child. To-day's audience laughs. Yet in *A Star is Born* they wept when Fredric March swam into death towards a poached-egg technicolor sunset for the sake of Janet Gaynor. What difference is there? Essentially none; only a change of conventions and technique—in fact *Flashbacks* is a very interesting reminder. Mutt and Jeff are there, doing all the Disney antics; Meliès displays all the trickeries of a Ned Mann; and Mary Pickford is a hundred times as good as Deanna Durbin. The real complaint about *Flashbacks* is that it is rather inadequate in what it sets out to do. It is good on cinema's infancy, hopeless on its middle period and it ignores the coming of sound. Its chief attraction is in the actualities—the old yet curiously up-to-date newsreels of the old Queen at her diamond jubilee, of Edward VII inspecting slaughtered game at Sandringham, of the Kaiser on the S.S. *Imperator*, and of the fire-engines dashing through George V's Coronation crowd. They and Charlie Chaplin have a perennial freshness.

THE LADY VANISHES

Marion Fraser reviews the new Hitchcock thriller, compares the French and the English versions of 'Prison Without Bars', and has a note on the new Marx Brothers film

HITCHCOCK'S film, *The Lady Vanishes*, comes at a time when such diverse products as *Sixty Glorious Years* and *Pygmalion* see the screen. With the drums beating over these major events in British filmland, it is well to remember that Hitchcock, since the earliest days of British movie, has been responsible for a considerable output of first class merchandise. As an isolated film *The Lady Vanishes* is not a terrific event in the industry, but it does serve as additional proof that Britain has something good to offer in the international sphere of entertainment.

Hitchcock retains his reputation as the most consistently entertaining of the British directors perhaps because he sticks to a type of film with which he has become thoroughly familiar. In his hands the technique of the spy drama has reached a high standard not so much because he is a master of melodrama but because he has a genius for combining horror, suspense and comedy.

Hitchcock is not only an expert director, but a stickler for detail. It is the small things in his films that count. His observation of human weaknesses and his capacity for exacting sympathy for each and everyone of his characters including the villain, are the qualities that recommend him to most of his admirers whether or not they appreciate his brand of humour.

THE spy in *The Lady Vanishes* is an inoffensive old lady who carries her packet of tea about in her handbag so that she will be sure of having a really good cup even in the most trying circumstances. Hero and heroine are present but not in stellar rôles, though as a concession to tradition, they do save the old lady's life and go off with each other in the end. The remaining members of the cast are passengers on a train where the major part of the action takes place, and they are an odd and interesting medley of types. Prominent are two cricket fans, played by Naunton Wayne and Basil Radford. One might have seen them of a summer afternoon at Lord's nonchalantly discussing the play. Here on a continental train their obsession is the cricket score and they remain blissfully impervious to the startling events that occur, happy in the knowledge that they are British subjects and that nothing can happen to them. Something does happen, however. One of them stops a bullet. A look of pained surprise comes over his face and he reluctantly reaches the conclusion that the time has come to fight. The two put on a display of careless but first-rate marksmanship.

In the shooting episode, of course, none but the villain is killed and one feels sure that the inoffensive old lady will escape unscathed in her tweeds and stout brogues, to deliver her important secret in Whitehall. With this fore-knowledge it is possible to enjoy the comedy to the full. There remains an element of doubt to allow one to savour the suspense and excitement.

Hitchcock is to be congratulated on the masterly casting of the lesser characters. This, always a pleasant feature of the Hitchcock films, tends to detract from the importance of the principals, a fact that may prove interesting at the box-office where names are supposed to be the first consideration. With *The Lady Vanishes* I hope Hitchcock will have the best of luck.

A STORY about a reformatory for girls has the distinction of being shown in two versions in the West End. It is *Prison Without Bars* directed by Brian Hurst at Denham, and a French version directed by Arnold Pressburger. The latter was made about a year ago. Corinne Luchaire, the star, is the only member of the original cast used in the English version.

Comparison reveals how closely the films have adhered to the original script, a fact that may prove interesting to those who did not realize that films could be made to measure.

The story is about a sternly disciplined reformatory where the girls are made as wretched as possible. One cannot believe this to be a true picture in a modern day and age. However, it serves its dramatic purpose, for a new woman governor with humanitarian ideas is sent to take charge, and the general atmosphere improves gradually until we reach sequences of sunshine and smiles. The reformatory provides a location for an unhappy romance between the governor and the reformatory doctor. This breaks down when the doctor finds that one of the prisoners is more attractive than his first love who has become so busily engaged in reform that she has little time for him. The prisoner discovers the broken romance and nobly renounces the doctor in gratitude for the sympathetic treatment she has received from the new governor. It is all very sad, but it provides a plot.

INTERESTING differences appear in the more atmospheric lighting of the French sets and a greater general restraint in the treatment though not in the acting, which is not surprisingly less reserved than in the Denham version. The opening scene is significant of the two different treatments. It is a courtyard scene where the delinquents are trudging out their daily constitutional. The French version takes recognition of the fact that the girls are girls as well as prisoners: the English version shows them shuffling, slouched automatons. From the pictorial point of view the latter is more impressive, but it is less realistic. This exaggeration for the sake of effect occurs elsewhere but not so innocently. I refer particularly to the scene where the star is dragged into the prison by the guards, her clothes daringly disarrayed. In the French version she is adequately clothed. As this particular scene is emphasized to the extent of providing the subject of much of the poster advertising, one is not surprised that film censors of foreign countries sometimes look on British films with suspicion.

A point of interest is the considerable improvement in the acting of Corinne Luchaire in the later English version. As she is seventeen and the French film was her first, experience does seem to count.

SPACE does not allow a review of the new Marx Brothers film, *Room Service*. I hope their next film will not repeat the same mistakes.

Whether the Marx Brothers accepted a script for which they were not responsible, or, whether, tiring of the old formula, they decided to assay a new one, is difficult to tell. The result reminds one of their stage appearance in London some time ago, when, for some reason or another, they just failed to click.

IN THE BALANCE

The best American and British film criticisms, edited for SEE by H. E. Blyth

Boy Meets Girl

(Lloyd Bacon—Warner Brothers)
Pat O'Brien, James Cagney, Marie Wilson, Ralph Bellamy, Frank McHugh.

Comedy comes to Cagney as the years go on. As one of the paid or lunatic scenarists in *Boy Meets Girl*, he is thoroughly comic. Along with Pat O'Brien, he upsets the whole studio, makes Hollywood seem far wilder than even the wildest dreams of those who never saw it, and, never letting down for a moment, helps to make this one of the successful films of the season. I don't think that Cagney the comic, however, will ever achieve the success of Cagney the scoundrel, the hoodlum, the racketeer. There is possibly a kind of intensity in his countenance and in his manner a nervousness that don't quite belong in the sphere of light humour; but only at times is one aware of this, and his natural competence carries him well through any scene. Doubtless with the years he will grow gayer. He is still too young to be free of care.

The Spewack play just blooms on the screen. Personally I think it's far funnier there than it ever was on the stage. A popular idea that the studios might balk at a film which held them up to such ridicule was never to be taken seriously, of course, the studios being too bright for that. Nothing is spared of the hullabaloo of casting and costuming, of the little waitress whose baby is signed up for pictures even before it is born, of the panic of agents and extras and cowboy stars. It is parody and burlesque, and reality, too.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

Boys' Town

(Norman Taurog—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)
Spencer Tracy, Mickey Rooney.

Boys' Town gets off to a grand start and it keeps its evenly interesting stride so long as Mickey remains the fresh little mug with his guard up against Spencer Tracy's Father Flanagan and the other refining influences of the home. It loses ground and never entirely regains it when the script writers discover they have made Mickey too tough a nut to crack except by resorting to artificial plot leverage. The highway accident involving Pee Wee, his little chum; the bank robbery and kidnapping, the flood of tears in the last reel, strike a too familiar discord. It manages, in spite of the embarrassing sentimentality of its closing scenes, to be a consistently interesting and frequently touching motion picture.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

In *Boys' Town* Spencer Tracy is once more a parson, and again his mild-mannered behaviour and his gentle chiding of wrongdoers has not the faintest touch of the ludicrous about it.

Despite Tracy's excellence, chief honours go to Mickey Rooney as the boy who won't be good. In his former films, Mickey has been a swaggering, grinning, rather obnoxious sort of youngster who would angrily deny that he ever wept. "I ain't a sissy!" he'd snarl—and stamp out. But in *Boys' Town* he cries for several minutes, and very few in any audience will be able to resist a few sympathetic tears. This is young Rooney's best performance to date, and a tremendous performance for a youngster. All of a sudden he has acquired a poise, a sense of proportion, a realisation that mouthing and mugging doesn't make an actor. Perhaps it is the influence of Spencer Tracy, who is noted for the sense of restraint he inspires in those actors who work on the set with him.

—Moore Raymond, *The Sunday Dispatch*

Room Service

(William A. Seiter—RKO-Radio)
The Marx Brothers.

Just by way of gilding the lily, or painting a red nose on it, RKO-Radio has turned loose the mad Marxes upon the helter-skelter comedy known to Broadway last season as *Room Service*. To phrase it moderately, the Marxes haven't made it any funnier; but neither has their presence interfered to any large extent with the disorderly progress of an antic piece. While there may be some question about the play's being a perfect Marx vehicle, there can be none about its being a thoroughly daffy show. The White Way Hotel, where three producers are hanging around on a shoestring, remains a place where anything can happen, and usually does.

The film version is surprisingly close to the play, even to the extent of limiting fully four-fifths of its action to the play's single set —a hotel room. There is a bit of added business at the end, a glimpse of the last act of the plot-hinging play—which justifies our doubts about young Mr. Davis of Oswego—and a telescopic shot of the juveniles romancing on a park bench. Beyond that all is confusion and the inspired nonsense of John Murray and Allan Boretz.

They were writing, you will remember, about the embarrassed producer, his partners and cast of twenty-two who had holed-in at the White Way Hotel and were trying to hold out against a raging hotel executive until a backer could be found for *Hail and Farewell*, the first effort of Davis of Oswego. Since they couldn't meet a backer unless they remained at the hotel, and since they couldn't remain at the hotel unless they paid their bill, and since they couldn't pay their bill unless they found a backer—well, you get it. In polite language, it would be a vicious circle; on Broadway, it would be behind the eight-

ball; in *Room Service* it is the beginning of a siege where everything goes, from measles to synthetic suicides.

There was nothing subtle in the writing; slapstick seldom is; but on the stage it had the advantage of seeming possible. The producing trio did the most incredible things, but did them out of desperation. With the Marx Brothers, absurdities seem always to be wooed for their own sake. That's a weakness of the picture. It does, however, offer compensation by accenting the comic qualities of the presumably non-burlesque characters. Withal, *Room Service* remains a skylark and a comedy to be laughed at moderately if you saw the play, immoderately if you missed it.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

After making a half dozen or so pictures without any appreciable plot structure, the Marx Brothers are suddenly confronted with Hollywood's most expensive script. (RKO paid $255,000 for the screen rights to *Room Service*.) It seems that for that price, the services of George Abbott might have been thrown in. For, in spite of the fact that the Murray-Boretz play is a rip-snorter of a farce in any language, without Mr. Abbott to squeeze the pace out of it, it becomes slow motion. However, non-addicts to the Broadway version will find this screen job funny and refreshing. It is never furious in its new form but it's gay, and the irrepressible Frères Marx play the bankrupt theatrical impresarios with evident ease. The fact that they are held back from some of their more violent histrionics by continuity will probably please more people that it will displease. Only Groucho seems unwilling to enter wholeheartedly into the thing as the producer who keeps his band of stranded players together through famine and insolvency. He goes off only half-cocked. The others, especially Phillip Loeb as a collection agent, are all that you could want. *On the mark.*

—*Stage*

The Adventures of Robin Hood

(Michael Curtiz and William Keighley—First National)
Errol Flynn, Claude Rains, Olivia de Havilland, Basil Rathbone.

As an expensive and brightly coloured illustration to Little Arthur's England this will do very well, and it is perhaps not the worse as entertainment because no one can be expected to believe it. Miss Olivia de Havilland, for example, in the part of Maid Marian, makes no attempt to be anything but the heroine of an English comedy, or Mr. Errol Flynn, in the part of Robin Hood, to do anything but give his own version of Mr. Douglas Fairbanks's romantic bravado. Mr. Claude Rains and Mr. Basil Rathbone are able to take their ease in the parts of Prince John and the evil Sir Guy of Gisbourne; after the elaborate scoundrels of modern drama such simple villainy must come as a holiday to them. Anyone who is not hero or villain must, of course, provide comic relief, and a company of fat monks, hearty yeomen, and timorous servants illustrate the lighter side of the Middle Ages. But any more penetrating reconstruction of the past might well distract attention from the processions and pageants, battles and banquets, flags and armour which, photographed "in full Technicolor," are the real and chief concern of the film. The whole is an extensive and gaudy canvas in the manner of nineteenth-century historical painting.

—*The Times*

It must have been an almost superhuman task to make a dull film out of *Robin Hood*, but the Warner Brothers, who have never flinched from major difficulties, have almost managed it. Except for Errol Flynn, who has a pleasant touch with these buckskin heroes, the film seems to me banality on the de luxe scale, a stupendous presentation of the obvious. In fact, I don't know when I have seen more money, more care, and more important workmanship lavished on the pursuit of a happiness that could have been had for a song.

This *Robin Hood*, mind you, is full of good intentions. It isn't a blustery, carefree thing like the old Fairbanks picture, In "full Technicolor," with a pontifical score by Erich Wolfgang Korngold, it is less concerned with gay doings beneath the greenwood tree, and Sherwood's preoccupation with sport and catch and nut-brown ale of good October brewing, than with the taxation troubles of the oppressed Saxons—a problem that gibes with Hollywood's vague current sympathy with the underdog, wherever and whoever he may be.

I think the thing that hurt me most about the picture was a remark that I overheard in the lobby after the performance. "That," said one woman to another, "is what happens when a legend like *Robin Hood* is tackled by Americans." Madam, I am sorry to correct you, but this is not necessarily what happens when a legend like *Robin Hood* is tackled by Americans. I have on my shelves an old, fat, green volume, with pages much thumbed by childish hands, and a large unformed signature across the fly-leaf. It is the best story of *Robin Hood* that has ever been written, done in the spare, strong English that puts to shame most of our slipshod modern phrasing. Howard Pyle, an American Quaker, was the author, and his good words cut clean through to the heart of legend. As a child I read it first, with passion, when I was seven. As a journalist I read it still, with humility to-day.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

SEE's Selection

Boys' Town	* *
Pygmalion	* *
The Lady Vanishes	*
St. Martin's Lane	*

Other Films covered in this issue:

Boy Meets Girl (Stars Reserved)

Flashbacks

Prison without Bars

Prison sans Barreaux

Room Service

The Adventures of Robin Hood

Marie Antoinette

Alexander's Ragtime Band

Royal Divorce

Carefree

Blockheads

Strange Monsieur Victor

Pygmalion

(Anthony Asquith and Leslie Howard—G.F.D.)
Leslie Howard, Wendy Hiller.

The talkiest of talkies (and wordiness is what the cinema diehards fear most from Mr. Shaw) *Pygmalion* shows that the right sort of talk is of as much importance as any other quality in the making of motion pictures. Here the dialogue is a treat to listen to. It is alive with the author's flashing perverseness, its wit is provocative and stimulating, and whenever it condescends to the commonplace there is invariably a point in view. It avoids sheer farce because Eliza, bewildered, tempted, and more and more uneasily conscious that she is growing into a woman whom it will hurt to be cast aside when the Professor has achieved his triumph, is too real in herself to be a figure of fun. After this performance, Wendy Hiller is undeniably a star. Eliza Doolittle, of course, is a peach of a part—but a peach to be treated with the utmost sensitiveness if it is to retain its bloom.

—A. T. Borthwick, *The News Chronicle*

Pygmalion is a treat for the connoisseur of fine acting and good dialogue. In these respects it is probably the best British film ever made. You would hardly expect a Shaw play to make real cinema, but even the cinema purist must admit that its shortcomings are compensated for by the brilliant acting and the chance to hear really first-class dialogue in a picture.

Wendy Hiller has high-cheek bones and an upper lip that sticks out a bit like Chevalier's lower one. You would not call her a conventional screen beauty. But in animation her face reflects a lovely sincerity and warm youthfulness that serves her well when her turn comes to canvass your sympathy for the girl who has been tricked out of her station. As the untidy, raucous flower-girl jeering at the sober professor and his ideas; as the automaton-like pupil learning to speak properly; as the lovely sedate but very nervous young woman who is imposed on a social gathering, and as the bitter, accusing, scornful, disillusioned subject of the experiment who has fallen in love with her teacher, Wendy Hiller displays a remarkable variety of resources, handling comedy and sadness with charm and tremendous effect.

—A. Jympson Harman, *The Evening News*

Marie Antoinette

(W. S. Van Dyke—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)
Norma Shearer, Tyrone Power, Robert Morley, John Barrymore.

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer admit that they expect certain criticisms from the more ruthless purists of a few scenes in *Marie Antoinette* which depart from historical exactitude. Equally frankly, they admit that the purists are right—according to their lights.

Marie Antoinette, which has involved more care in research work, and in accuracy to the last detail of costume, make-up, and so on, than any other film ever made, contains some scenes which do not occur in the history books (which does not necessarily mean that they did not occur in real life).

Here is what one of the authors of the screen play, and its famous director, W. S. Van Dyke, have to say about this, in a cable received to-day from Hollywood:—

"Most difficult problem confronting us starting work on *Antoinette* was compressing into two hours a long vivid, eventful period of history," says Claudine West, who collaborated with Donald Ogden Stewart and Ernest Vajda on the screen play. "The creation of an important motion picture is a job of work requiring adherence to dramatic tenets and one not automatically dovetailing history. In our case these two elements were often at odds, and it became a matter of compromise. We reached the belief that if we could retain the feeling and spirit of those times and people we could achieve reality, though we occasionally circumvented historical accuracy. For example, we had often to compress into shorter periods events which actually took decades."

W. S. Van Dyke says: "After reading the script of Stefan Zweig's biography, and the research material, I knew all that was essential for me to know about the historic background. History itself was for my purposes relatively unimportant. It was people that interested me. I liked the script because the story was told simply, not so much in terms of history, but in terms of people who made history. We spared no effort to make the picture historically authentic in spirit; but our primary purpose was to create entertainment, not to give a history lecture. To-day's audiences demand speed and action in pictures. I faced one especially serious problem—to compress a period, from the opening with Marie Antoinette as a girl, through her first years of gay, giddy, extravagant life; her development into womanhood as Queen of France; and the crushing tragedy of her later years. It was necessary for each transition that make-up and costume be logical, and seem natural to the audience."

And thus the art director, Cedric Gibbons: "Mansart, when building Versailles, thoughtlessly failed to realize that the Palace might some day be a motion picture background. As a result, the Palace did not lend itself to cinematograph filming; and I was obliged to create an impressive entrance hall and grand staircase matching the decorative feeling of the Mansart originals. The authentic gallery, with rich marbles and gorgeous apartments, was impossible photographically, being 320 feet long, and only 35 feet wide, which, to moviegoers, would be merely a tunnel. When we designers have to lie a little, we sit between the Scylla of a few architectural cranks, and the Charybdis of the great mass of cinemagoers who take their historical buildings only vaguely, but frequently form positive impressions. In taking liberties, we must steer a course between extremes."

—A Statement by M.G.M.

Alexander's Ragtime Band

(Henry King—20th Century-Fox)
Tyrone Power, Alice Faye, Don Ameche, Ethel Merman, Jack Haley.

The pleasantest prodding of the memory that a motion picture has accomplished. Irving Berlin's career, which got off to a heigh-ho start in 1911 with the publication of *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, conscientiously covers every event of sentimental importance from that year to the present one—a fact made spectacularly dramatic by this production. The significance of his tunes can be judged by the stalwart progression of a plot that is no more than a series of night-club appearances of the leading players. It is the music which makes *Alexander's Ragtime Band* a show to be seen as well as heard. The nostalgia is gentle, and the humour is allowed to flow naturally from the incongruity of customs and costumes of a bygone day. Tyrone Power, Alice Faye, Ethel Merman, Jack Haley, and those innumerable singers who enter so gloriously into the spirit of the thing—these and Director Henry King are to be congratulated for sustaining a vitality that is not supplied in the sketchy plottings of the script. The continuous undertone of melodies that are invariably associated with pleasure give the picture great sentimental power. And the singing of these tunes is always full and spontaneous and spirited. In other words, here is a fine tribute to Mr. Berlin and a fine treat to everybody else: *His music hath charms indeed.*

—Stage

A Royal Divorce

(Jack Raymond—Paramount)
Pierre Blanchar, Ruth Chatterton, Frank Cellier.

It is not any tampering with historical truth that lifts this film into the ranks of the sublimely silly, but its extraordinary casting, dialogue and direction. No one could have failed to recognize a fine actress in the Fran Dodsworth of Ruth Chatterton, nor will Pierre Blanchar's genius be doubted by those who saw *Crime et Châtiment* and *Carnet de Bal*. But nothing can reconcile us to a Josephine who is just a plump, mischievous Southern belle and a Bonaparte with an accent and a lisp. When they meet, he tells her fortune: "I see a mawwaige with one of the gweat ones of Fwance." Hearing his name, her brows knit in a puzzled American frown: "How d'ya spell it?" she asks. When she has sung him a Creole song or two and leant, with dangerous coquetry, upon the raised lid of the harpsichord, the trick is done. On his wedding night, however, Napoleon gets a raw deal: chased off the historic four-poster by Josephine's pet dog, he has to curl up, still booted and spurred, on a very short settee. A good scene of the Bonaparte family squabbling just before his coronation is followed by Josephine's suggestion that the girls will soon consent to carry her train if their brothers are promised kingdoms. "A good idea!" says Napoleon; "Spain, Naples, Rome; yes, just enough to go round." After the ceremony, "It was a beautiful day," remarks the Empress Fran, "and I certainly did enjoy myself." Period flavour: Josephine still clings to her harpsichord at Malmaison in 1813, six years after Beethoven's *Apassionata*. Solitary compensation: Frank Cellier's smooth and subtle Talleyrand. Conclusion: *not* suitable for exhibition to adult audiences.

—Peter Galway,
The New Statesman and Nation

The Lady Vanishes

(Alfred Hitchcock—Gainsborough)
Margaret Lockwood, Michael Redgrave, Paul Lukas, Dame May Whitty, Cecil Parker, Linden Travers, Mary Clare.

If I have sometimes been rather more critical of Alfred Hitchcock's work than most of my colleagues, for the simple reason that I value his intelligence and my own, that makes it all the more agreeable to be able to say that *The Lady Vanishes* is his best picture. I would go further and say that it is easily the best thriller ever made in this country.

Much of Mr. Hitchcock's work has been spoiled for me by his undisguised, outrageous cynicism. Was a situation impossible? Well, the poor fish out in front would never notice it. Were the characters illogical? Who cared? Was a scene obviously dragged in for the camera effects? What did that matter so long as the effects were good?

At his best he is vivid, exciting, funny, a master of the technique of telling an incident, if not exactly a story, with the maximum of visual impact. At his worst you feel that somebody with seven disconnected and entirely different stories is trying to hammer them into your head with a blunt instrument. In *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, for instance, there were at least ten things that couldn't or wouldn't happen. But if they didn't happen the story stopped, so Mr. Hitchcock just went blandly on, and I have no doubt that if you mentioned them he would just smile that slow, guileless smile of his and point out that on both sides of the Atlantic *The Man Who Knew Too Much* pleased millions. And isn't that what pictures are for? Well, yes. But there is no reason why you shouldn't please the millions who don't care and the millions who do, if you only take enough trouble with the plot; and this is what has happened with *The Lady Vanishes*.

Don't misunderstand me. The story is no masterpiece. Fundamentally it is neither better nor worse than a thousand others of the

this-spy-must-not-pass-the-frontier-with-the papers school. Where it is good, uncommonly good, is in the characterisation. How much of it belongs to the original novel, *The Wheel Spins*, how much (obviously a great deal) has been supplied by those two brilliant script writers, Sidney Gilliatt and Frank Launder, and how much has been developed by Mr. Hitchcock on the set I do not know. To the public it is unimportant, anyway. All that matters is that once the yarn gets going, after a somewhat slow start, it moves rapidly, excitingly and not implausibly, to its climax, with a hundred effective incidents by the way.

—Campbell Dixon, *The Daily Telegraph*

Carefree

(Mark Sandrich—R.K.O. Radio)
Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Ralph Bellamy.

Purveyors of psychoanalysis will undoubtedly note that Hollywood's treatment of psychiatry resembles closely its treatment of a good alcoholic spree. Thus, in an analysis of this plot, it will be necessary to substitute the words "hypnosis" and "subconscious" for the words "binge" and "hangover." Into Dr. Fred Astaire's office stalks as normal and uncomplex a patient as ever consulted a psychoanalyst. But a whiff of ether and a wave of the hand before the eyes, and Ginger Rogers weaves away with hilarious results (you see, no binge, just hypnosis). The plot consists in Miss Rogers' getting out of one engagement into another, and more agreeable, one. The gaiety consists in some expert comedy by Miss Rogers and some acceptable repartee by the six writers listed. The excitement consists of three superlatively novel dances—a golf sequence by Mr. Astaire which will leave you gasping with admiration, a slow-motion dance and a Yam session that are definitely in the groove. The music is by a composer of whom you may have heard, Irving Berlin. This all adds up to hallelujah. Substract a slight ennui of narrative, and you have the correct score. *Ginger Rogers can throw a stone through our window any time she wants to.*

—*Stage*

Flashbacks

Mr. C. B. Cochran calls his *Flashbacks* "a century of shows on the screen," and points out that he has designed it, not as a history, but "just as an entertainment." His idea is to stick, without any guying, to the style of the presentation of the period. He has no commentator. The early scenes, beautifully hand-coloured magic lantern slides of the 1830's, are shown in complete silence. The primitive cinematograph reels that follow have the dear old piano in the orchestra pit playing the familiar syrupy and martial numbers to be found in all the showmen's handbooks of the period. By the time we reach Blanche Sweet in a one-reel drama, *If We Only Knew*, a small cinema orchestra slides wooingly into the melodies. There are "effects" off, and once, in the early section, a whiskered and frock-coated soloist takes the stage with a discreet spotlight on him.

The performance runs for two hours and covers, in a necessarily rather perfunctory way, the range of shows popular between 1838 and 1938 with audiences in this country. The later sections, from 1916 to the present day, are exclusively newsreel pictures, covering every topic, from the signing of the Peace Treaty at Versailles to Don Bradman's first appearance in England, and leading up to a dramatic curtain on the freshest newsreel records of the hour.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Sunday Observer*

Blockheads

(John G. Blystone—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)
Laurel and Hardy.

It would have been pleasant to say a friendly farewell to Laurel and Hardy, who have just made their last joint bow. But candour compels me to admit that *Blockheads* is very, very dull. Slowness was always the essence of their clowning, but here it invades the framework as well; situations are laboriously prepared, and yield after all no more than a kick in the pants. Still their style of humour was a link with the cinema's absurd, happy childhood; and in the past they have been very funny. Do you remember a short in which they coaxed a pianola up an interminable flight of stone steps? Good-bye, Laurel; good-bye, Hardy; I shall remember you as two immobile and silent figures gazing sadly at that pianola, as, for the tenth time, it bumped melodiously down and down.

—Peter Galway,
The New Statesman and Nation

The Strange Monsieur Victor

(Jean Gremillon—French)
Raimu, Pierre Blanchar.

Though such people have actually existed, it is difficult for a film to make a complete study of the character of a man who leads a double life; a most respectable tradesman who in his spare time is a professional criminal. The adjustments of such a character are surely too intricate for proper expression in this medium, but the film manages very well by concentrating on the tradesman, the family man, and the sentimentalist, merely suggesting at moments the strain that results from his life of crime. It is exactly the part for Raimu, and he makes a wonderful shopkeeper, incomparably bourgeois and self-satisfied. It is as good as a holiday in France to see him selling to a widow, for a photograph of her dead husband, one of those frames covered in sea-shells which abound in the shops of Toulon. And Toulon itself, where most of the action takes place, is brilliantly described, with exactly the right degree of objectivity, though it would have been agreeable to have seen rather more of Puget's architecture. There is also a quite elaborate plot, for the shopkeeper commits a murder, allows another man to go to prison for it, and then shelters him when he escapes. All this is very well done, without either sensationalism or false sentiment, and M. Pierre Blanchar, in the part of the innocent victim, displays as always a disturbing vitality, though it is not a part which requires the use of all his talents.

—*The Times*

NOVEMBER RELEASES

SEE's Choice

Boy from Barnardo's (M.-G.-M.) * *
DIRECTOR: Sam Wood
STARRING: Freddie Bartholomew
Mickey Rooney
Herbert Mundin
(Reviewed September)

Doctor Rhythm (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Frank Tuttle
STARRING: Bing Crosby
Beatrice Lillie
Mary Carlisle

Professor Beware (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Elliot Nugent
STARRING: Harold Lloyd
Phyllis Welch
Raymond Walburn
(Reviewed August)

Shopworn Angel (M.-G.-M.)
DIRECTOR: H. C. Potter
STARRING: Margaret Sullavan
James Stewart
Walter Pidgeon
(Reviewed September)

Other Releases include :

Adventures of Marco Polo (United Artists)
DIRECTOR: Archie Mayo
STARRING: Gary Cooper
Basil Rathbone
Sigrid Gurie
(Reviewed October)

Challenge (United Artists)
DIRECTOR: Milton Rosmer
STARRING: Luis Trenker
Robert Douglas
(Reviewed July)

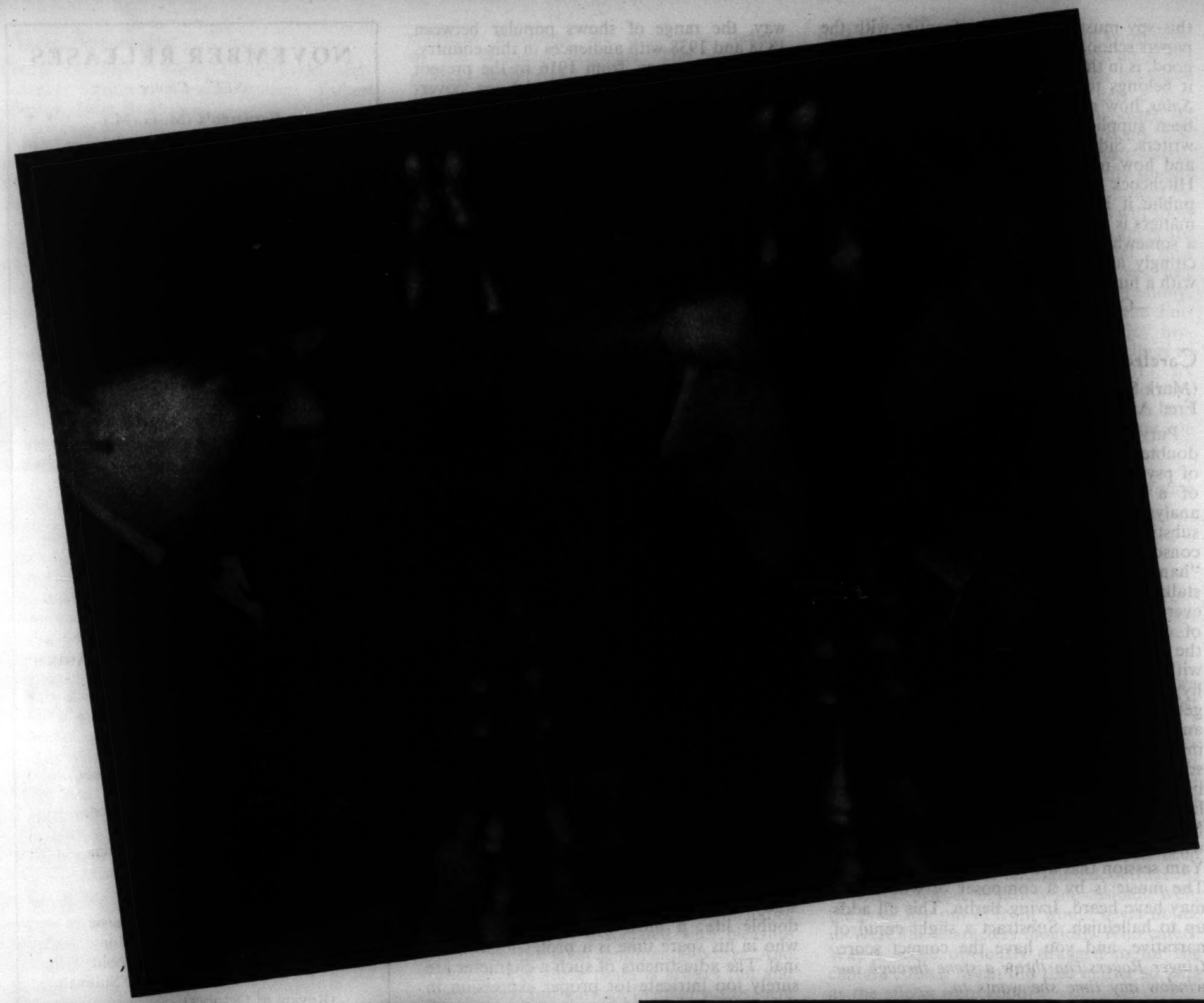
Crowd Roars (M.-G.-M.)
DIRECTOR: Richard Thorpe
STARRING: Robert Taylor
Edward Arnold
Maureen O'Sullivan
(Reviewed October)

Goldwyn Follies (United Artists)
DIRECTOR: George Marshall
STARRING: Adolphe Menjou
Ritz Brothers
Andrea Leeds
Kenny Baker
(Reviewed April)

Heart of Arizona (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Lesley Selander
STARRING: William Boyd
George Hayes
Russell Hayden

Kidnapped (20th Century-Fox)
DIRECTOR: Alfred Werker
STARRING: Warner Baxter
Freddie Bartholomew
Arleen Whelan
(Reviewed September)

Vivacious Lady (R.K.O. Radio)
DIRECTOR: George Stevens
STARRING: Ginger Rogers
James Stewart



Face of Scotland (*Realist*) *Wealth of a Nation* (*Strand*)

SCOTTISH TESTAMENT

Scotland screened truthfully for the first time, in seven new short films, says RITCHIE CALDER

TIME was when I shed tears on leaving Scotland. Time now is when I feel like shedding them when I go back.

For problems of Scotland are as intense and urgent as the tone of Harry Watt's commentary on *Wealth of a Nation*. The soul of a nation is in pawn. And only Scotland can redeem it.

That is why the Films of Scotland series is one of the most important contributions of documentary. The screen has become the pulpit of a new Reformation, the film the modern John Knox. And maybe they will rouse Scotsmen to sign a new Covenant.

Of the seven, *Wealth of a Nation* is to me the most important. It challenges where I, more uncouthly, might condemn. It shows the Scotland which gave the world the Industrial Revolution, which pledged its destiny to coal, iron and steel; the Scotland of James Watt, Adam Smith and the ruthless industrialist; the Clydeside which drained the manhood of Scotland into the shipyards, to build the ships of the Seven Seas; Scotland blackened by prosperity.

And it shows that Scotland in decline, shackled with the steel chains of its own making to the heavy industries it created. Shipyards derelict. Its steel industry migrating like its people to the hopeful South. Its jute industry, alien to the country and a fading tribute to its skill, competing with Indian mills which Scottish craftsmen equipped in the Hooghli and the Ganges.

Almost too late, Scotsmen begin to think again, to plan new industries which belong to a new age, to harness its water-power to electricity, to turn from heavy metals to aluminium, to build satellite towns to replace the concentration camps of the industrial lowlands.

Stuart Legg and Donald Alexander have shown a new Scotland in embryo, but I fear me it is still unborn. Scotsmen themselves must father it. And it will not be born with James Watt's spoon in its mouth.

The *Face of Scotland* is turning to the sun, but it is still shadowed with coal smoke. Basil Wright goes back to the Romans, tries, and, I believe, succeeds, to show the rugged soul of a country which resisted invasion, annealed itself in the hell-fire of John Knox and the icy waters of Calvinism, sturdy, independent and unyieldingly democratic. He reminds us of the Scotland of the meagre meal-poke, which bred philosophers out of half-starved students and made skilled craftsmen out of ghillies. But the best unspoken commentary on modern Scotland is the football crowd. Scottish character may be reflected there, but it is housed in stunted if wiry bodies the legacy of sun-robbed, ill-fed, slum-housed Industrial Scotland.

As a product of the vaunted educational system of Scotland, the first national, all-for-all, educational system in the world, I wanted to cheer Alexander Shaw's *The Children's Story*. For Scotland's success in education, like its success in industry and the ruling of Empires, threatens to be its undoing. It has been too loyal to John Knox. An education founded on religion became itself a religion. And the dispassionate lens of the camera may make even Scotsmen see their fallacies.

The film recalls the familiar grind, the learning for learning's sake, the force-fed scholars swallowing education whole. And it reveals the new conception, the equipping of the children for modern life, the school-feeding, the psychological clinics, the turning away from the academic grind of the past to the needs of the future. Fine!

Pathé has taken the hard-pressed fishing industry for its theme but the general impression was much more optimist than reality. *Sea Food* is *à la maison* served up with too appetising sauce.

But Mary Field and G.B.I. in *They Made the Land* have told me a lot I did not know. Foot by foot, peat by peat, the Scots are shown wresting their fields from grudging soil. They struggled for hundreds of years, stripping the peat from the soil, battling the winds and the sand and fighting the bracken and the thistles. That fight still goes on. It is another challenge to Scotland. But the commentary with its inversions, repetitions and continual plucking of the same string might have been good if it had not been overdone. It is a kind of linguistic hiccups, or a surfeit of radishes.

Scotland for Fitness and *Sport in Scotland* are appendices to thought-provoking programme, outriders of what I regard as a film crusade.

This series will tell the world of the other side of Scotland, tear away the tartan curtains of romance and show a nation fighting for its existence.

And I hope it will rouse the Scotsmen themselves.

P.S. But why Lister? Twice he is claimed as one of the great Scots. He was born at Upton in Essex.

Wealth of a Nation (*Strand*)

They Made the Land (*G.B.I.*)

"Did you put the cat out?"

Our Casting Department

Hamlet.....	Joe E. Brown
Claudius	C. Aubrey Smith (of course)
Ophelia	The Marx Brothers
Queen	The Ritz Brothers
Polonius	C. Aubrey Smith (of course)
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern	John Barrymore
Horatio	Bobby Breen
Laertes.....	Mickey Rooney
Courtiers, Gallants, Gravediggers, Soldiers, Sailors, etc.....	Spencer Tracy

Homage to Gable

By William Shakespear

Hark! Hark! The Clark at Heaven's gate sings
And payrolls 'gin to rise....

"I think I'm going to sneeze"

PRESSMEN'S BENEFIT

We have just patented yet another labour-saving device for which all our Brothers of the Pen (copyright by Reuter, Press Association and Central News) will, we are sure, be as grateful as any set of hard-boiled skunks (no offence taken where none meant) are able to be. It is very simple—just a Form, similar to those used by Government Departments for Motor Licences and what not, which can be filled in at leisure, thus saving the Newspaper Boys those shivering waits at Southampton, while the *Berengaria* docks, or, worse still, those press-receptions in Park Lane.

Here it is:

Note. This form, when completed, should be sent (postage pre-paid) to the Editor, the Daily Tale, c/o Dusty's Snack Bar, Fleet Street.

ALL QUESTIONS MUST BE ANSWERED.

1. Name in full (if no name, enclose photograph).
2. Sex (if none, write "NONE").
3. Have you a contract? (If none, use your discretion.)
4. With what firm? (Don't be silly.)
5. Do you know what B.O. is? (Be careful.)
6. What do you think of:
   - Our Policemen?
   - Our Licensing hours?
   - Our Fans?
   - Our Hitchcock?
   - St. Paul's?

   (*Cross out those not applicable.*)
7. Are you being interviewed: (*a*) in State Room? (*b*) on gangway? (*c*) or a dainty apartment looking out over the trees and A.R.P. trenches of Hyde Park? If the latter, what is there to drink?
8. (For male candidates only.) (*a*) Are you married? engaged? or both? (*b*) What's your gag—toughery, romance or just plain dumb? (Candidates must on no account attempt more than one gag.)
8. (For female candidates only.) Do you (*a*) swing a slender ankle; (*b*) eat marrons glacés; (*c*) spik Engleesh? (as far as we are concerned, candidates may attempt the lot.)
9. How long are you staying? If so, why?
10. Are you aware that a similar form to this has been sent to your worst rival, who arrived two hours earlier than you did?
11. What's it worth to you to have (his/her) story jerked? (Cheques should be left open, wide open. We will fill in the amount)
12. If you can't write or read, you'd better call the whole thing off.

Signature

(Don't be afraid, it's not a contract.)

Date

ALORUM

CARLOS MARSDEN

Did You Know—

That expert scientists have proved that if a film critic were to smile his face would crack and fall off?

That if Mr. Samuel Goldwyn were laid end to end his braces would burst?

That every time a film is made about Queen Victoria a million begonias clap their petals and shout "Goody!"?

That Odeons can be planted in any herbaceous border at any time of the year?

That the lump in a producer's throat is put there to prevent him swallowing his words?

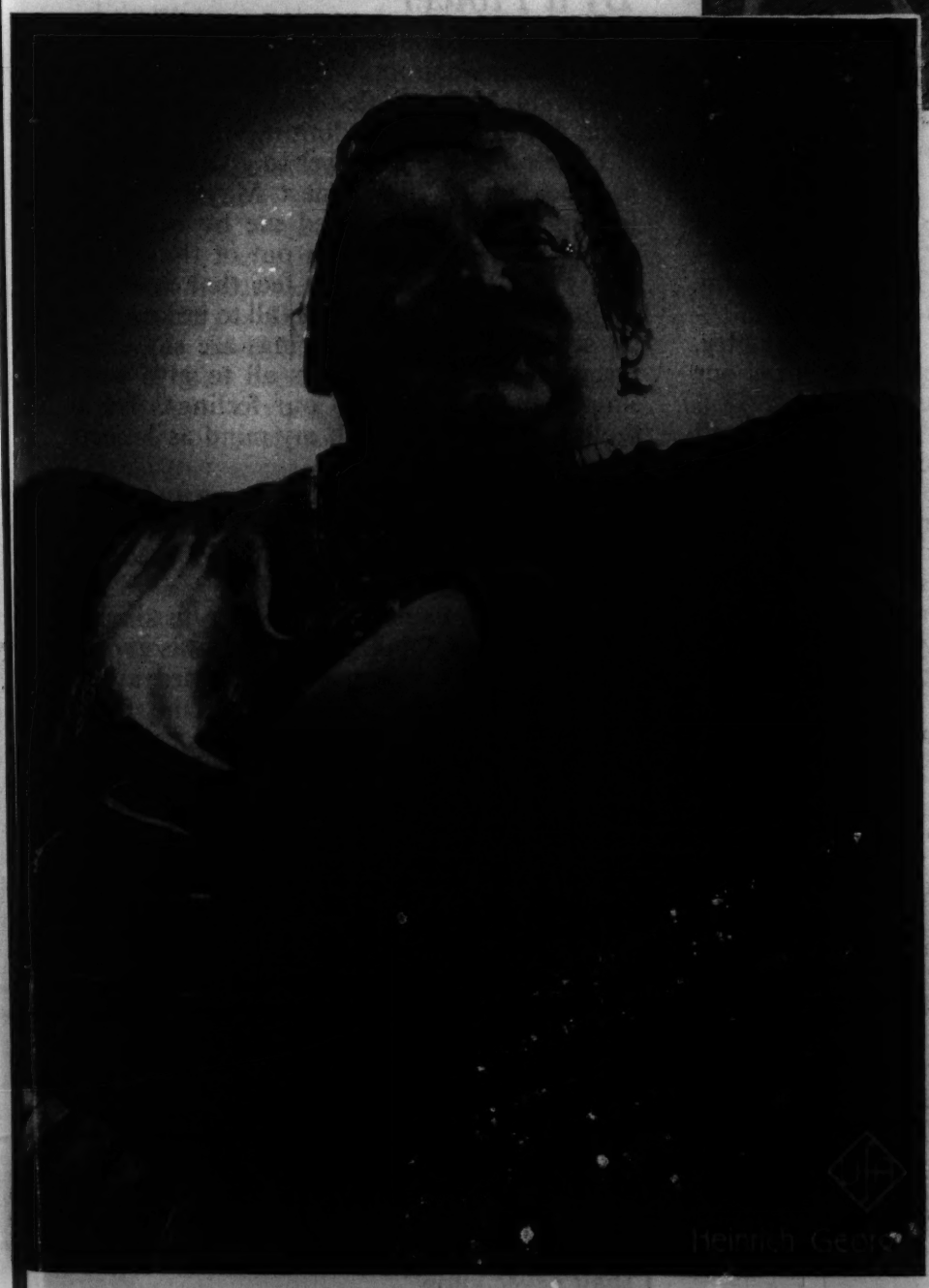
That there is no lump of any sort in a distributor's throat?

That the Editor won't stand for any more of this?

★ ★ ★

In re Danielle Darrieux—
I could almost marrieux.

Jam Session at the British Board of Film Censors



"Once again Miss Dietrich, please"

WITHOUT COMMENT

"Korda was beaten in the Midland Nursery because he did not stay a yard more than six furlongs. At that point he was out clear, but weakened rapidly. The field cut up rather badly, and odds were laid on Korda."
(*From the Racing Column of an evening paper*)

A Few Song Titles

" If you're waking, call me Shirley,
For I'm to be Queen of the Mae."

"My old Deutsch."

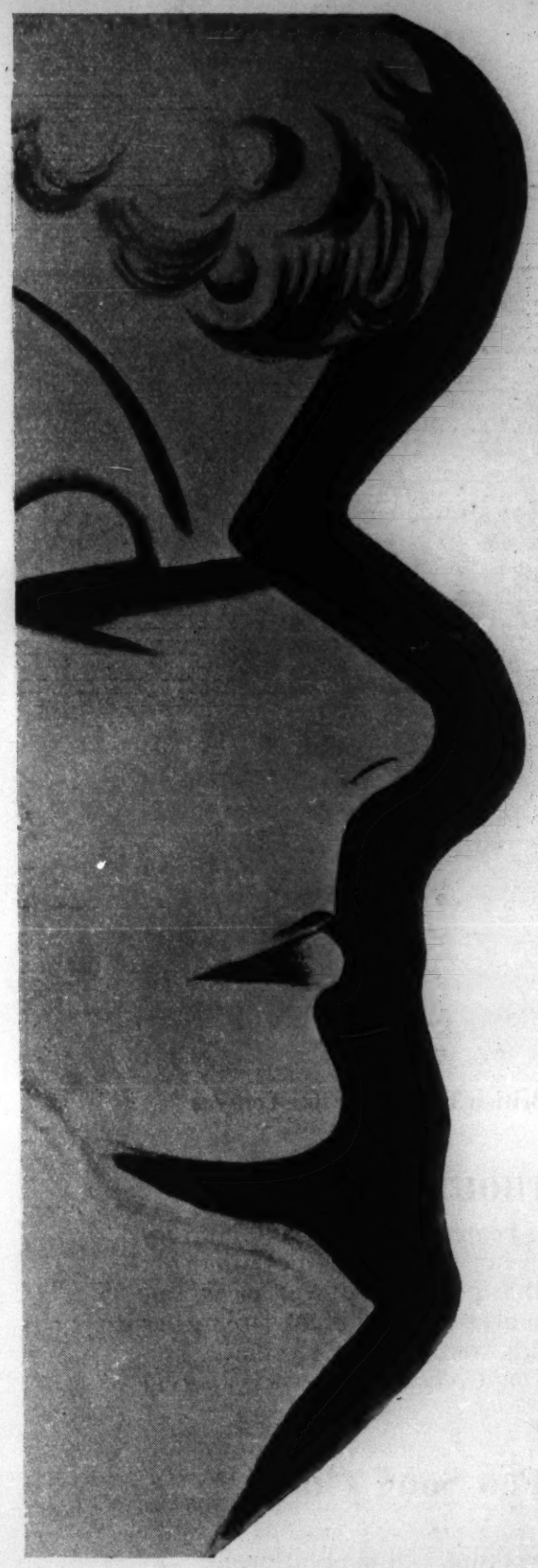
"For the Rainer she Rainereth every day."

"I TANK I FLY--"

We are asked to state that the rumour that Greta Garbo is to play the part of Neville Chamberlain in a new version of *The Moon and Sixpence* is entirely without foundation.

★ ★ ★

I wish
The Sisters Gish
Not to manson
Gloria Swanson—
Were still acting.
Life would be less exacting.



GARBO on SUNDAYS

by Russell Ferguson

By a Man about Town

A few notes on the most famous woman in the world.

I may be forty-two round the waist. I may be more than forty-two round the clock. But I am not so old, thank Heaven, that I am past shedding a tear for unrequited love and star crossed lives.

Your uncle is half-way along Wardour Street, when he meets up with Barney Brewster, who kept a pub before the war at the palace end of St. James's Street, when palaces were palaces, and pubs were pubs.

Hello, sez I. Hello, sez he. Witheraway, sez I. To the movies, sez he. Right, sez I, I'll come with you. Sez you, sez he. Sez I, sez me. And off we goes.

Well, we sees Greta Garbo in Marie Walewska.

Your uncle has been in love twice and once ere now. You might never think it to look at him. In fact sometimes I catch a glimpse of myself in the mirror, when I can see past my cigar, and wonder at it myself. But there it is. Nobody loves a fat man, but gee! how a fat man can love!

I will not deny that when I came out of the cinema I had a tear in my eye. I have had too many misfortunes myself not to feel the misfortunes of others. There was the time at St. Quentin when the sniper hit the rum. . . . There was the time at Bapaume when the rum, alas, hit me.

"Some take of the misfortunes which mortals may befall,
But Hi, me bucks, and Ho, me hearties,
I have had them all."

But I talk of myself too much. Let's change the subject. Let's talk about my new hat.

By the Voice of England

She crosses from New York to Stockholm, and anon from Stockholm to New York.

There is a lesson here for this country. Where does our allegiance lie? Where is our destiny? Where is our future?

Make no mistake, this country can and must, should and will, read the lesson of the star. We must learn while there is yet time ere it is too late. (This journal has again and again warned the country against the fatal error of turning our backs to the East and facing the West. This journal has again and again warned the country against the still more fatal error of turning our backs to the West and facing the East.)

This journal has again and again warned the country against the third course of changing front rapidly and vacillating weakly from one side to the other, facing now East, now West.

Surely the answer is obvious? Surely before it is too late we shall and will acknowledge where our natural destiny must and shall lie?

Once and for all, then: we must make ourselves strong, and take our stand—facing four-square to the world. Not facing this way, not facing that way, but in our inexorable might and majesty FACING BOTH WAYS.

This is the lesson of the star. This is the lesson that we can and must learn. Let us rise in our might and cry, we will and shall, we can and must, we may, can, must, might, could, would, should.

For if not, the alternative is plain. If this lesson is not learned, and learned now, and learned for ever, the history of our time will come to be written in the most terrible words the ear of man has ever heard, the eye of man has even seen. Simple words fraught with the deepest, blackest terror. MENE, MENE, TEKEL UPHARSIN, ARMAGEDDON, MORATORIUM, MEGATHERIUM, MILLENIUM, ALUMINIUM, PANDEMONIUM.

★ ★ ★

By a Flower

I left the theatre in tears. Let scoffers scoff, let detractors detract. When I had seen Greta Garbo in Marie Walewska, I was in tears. I am not ashamed to admit it.

I knelt down in the foyer to give thanks for a good woman. The smart Mayfair crowd leaving the theatre passed me by on either side. As I looked at them out of the corner of my eye, I could not but feel that each one of them would have given his all to be kneeling by my side. But human beings are shy creatures. It is not given to us all to give way, simply and honestly, to our feelings. These thoughts passed through my mind as I knelt in prayer.

When they had all gone, I got up and went out into the street. Smart Mayfair crowds were gathered round a bus stop in Piccadilly. I knelt down on the pavement.

A policeman came and asked, in his simple way, what I was doing. I told him I was giving thanks for a good woman. He turned away for a few minutes, and when I saw his face, there were tears in his eyes.

When the crowds had all gone away, I went home. There I knelt down again, beside my bed, and in front of me I had two photographs—my own, and Greta Garbo's. As I prayed, I saw them dimly through a mist of tears. I could not tell which was which.

All was still, except for the sound of a wee mouse behind the wainscot. Come out and pray, wee mouse, I said, Come out and give thanks for a good woman. But the wee mouse ran away.

I went to bed. As I was falling asleep, I felt a hand caress my cheek, and another hand caress my brow. The hand on my cheek was my own, but it seemed to me that the hand on my brow was Greta Garbo's.

Or perhaps it was the other way round. I shall never know.

CULTURE with the CAN-CAN

The Gas Industry's new films combine education with entertainment in a new way, says S. E. R. WYNNE

"H'EDUCATION *plus* h'entertainment!" And my word, wasn't he right, that old gentleman who stood on the sidewalk and acted as public relations officer for the proprietors of a now defunct cinema at Brighton!

Education *plus*: that's What the Public Wants.

Education is not popular. Which is a pity, because, like *foie gras* and Sunday Mornings in Bed, it is undoubtedly a Good Thing. Nevertheless, it can be popularised; and nowhere is a good hand more assured than when the popularisation is done by way of the short film. Well done, that is. Well done, as it was in *Night Mail*, *Coal Face*, *Men Against the Sea*, *Children at School*, *Nutrition*, *Housing Problems*.

A lot of gas films there; but then a public utility so alive to cultural functions which even its sales department need not be scared of deserves a credit line. And now it offers another foursome of new films, two at least certain to rate high in the libraries.

Education, as we are saying, can be popularised. It is in *Plan for Living* which puts practical dietetics on the screen and leaves Boulestin in the back kitchen in its treatment of how to buy the right foods and, having bought them, how to use them properly.

Here is our old friend Mr. Julian Huxley commentating to a sort of near-Disney symphony in which the three essentials of nutrition are presented by cartoon figures of a builder (for and on behalf of the body-building foods), a policeman (the protective foods), and a stoker (the energy-giving foods).

Here is Mr. Huxley still commentating as stoker, builder, policeman call up their armies of protein and calory; cartoons dissolve into flesh-and-blood lilliputs, six inches high; and lettuce and cheese and meat and butter and milk and eggs (in diamante and chiffon) swing into a sort of Beeton ballet.

It is a perky three-in-one: a silly symphony, a musical, a screen Mrs. Beeton (with a bit of Cecil, too). It is also education *plus*.

While Mrs. Newlywed's eyes are popping like Cantor's at little figures cavorting on her kitchen table—and swinging it in a casserole in a cooker (nice trick work, this) for a finale which produces an enthusiastic audience at the dinner table—Mrs. Newlywed is learning.

PAUL ROTHA, with *New Worlds for Old*, had a different piece of work to do.

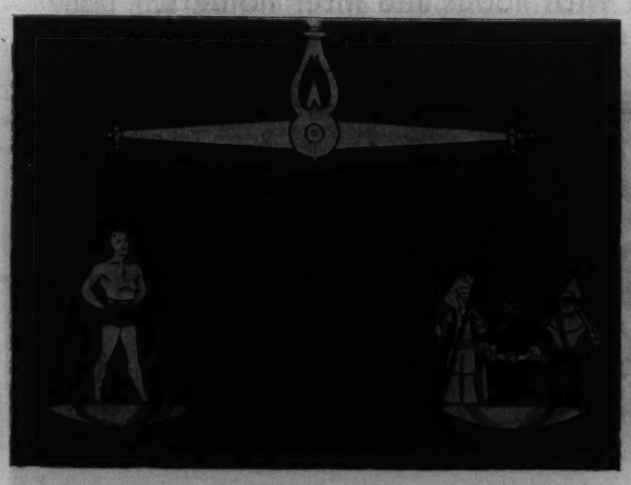
He had to show, simply, the history of gas from the early nineteenth century to the present day and, not so simply, how gas has met the challenge of electricity. These two things he achieves in a documentary impressive as a picture of a transformed Britain and as a record of an industry alive to its purpose in contemporary society.

Taking a cue from (and tilting it at) the current fashion for Victorians, he sets off with some vivid Victorian sequences, beginning with well-covered chorus ladies dancing the Can-Can to the flicker of naked gas jets. Exciting history, this. But the film really moves when electricity, straddling the countryside with its steel pylons, arrives to confound the old ideas; a switch to challenge the tap.

Here Rotha uses, from Living Newspaper, the voice of the unseen critic to interrupt Alistair Cooke's well-spoken commentary and big and little people to show what one industry's handling of new social customs, new ways of living, means to the community.

New Worlds for Old, nearly titled *Public Statement Number One*, marks the first occasion on which an industry has by documentary film told its own story, faithfully and fairly. And, when you come to think of it, daringly. For it takes something more than skilful presentation to pick up a challenge like electricity's to gas, decide your answer, and make of it a picture that will satisfy the curious mind as well as the casual eye. Here it is done.

The two other films do not claim for themselves more than the place of competent fillers. Cavalcanti's *Happy in the Morning* is slick and gay and brings Henry Hall and his band as a useful ally to hot water publicity. *Warming Up* is as pleasant a way as any to be reminded that in this England some form of heat is needed on 210 days out of 365. In two words, education *plus*.



"DELETE ALL SHOTS OF CAN-CAN DANCE"

wrote the Censor on his red slip when he saw NEW WORLDS FOR OLD. "Too erotic to be shown in this country," said the Board's Secretary in an interview. SEE reminds the forgetful old gentlemen of Carlyle House that they have passed so many films with Can-Can girl scenes that we can only remember 'Evergreen,' 'Lady of the Boulevards,' 'L'Atlantide' and 'The Girl from Maxim's.' It appears that the flesh, silk stockings and suspenders of show girls to-day are fun to the Censor but the frou-frou skirts and woollen stockings of the '90's' are just degenerate.

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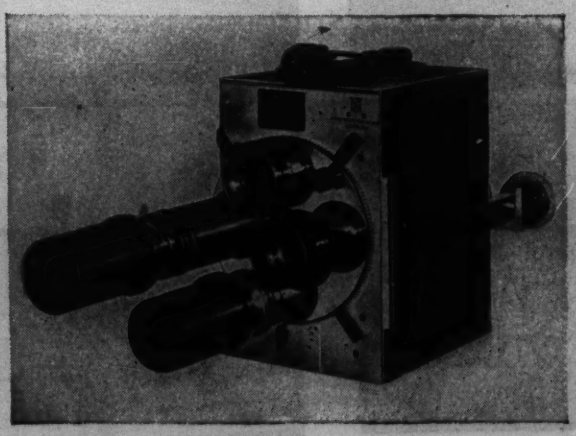

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Seamy Side Song Hits

Newest Song and Swing Records reviewed by STAN PATCHETT

Sing me a song of social significance
Sing me of wars and sing me of bread lines,
Sing me of front page news. . . .

You'll find not only social significance, but catchy melodies and astringent lyrics in the four numbers on Brunswick records from *Pins and Needles*, the amateur revue staged by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, that became (and still is) a Broadway smash hit.

The four numbers are *Sing me a Song of Social Significance*, sung by Kay Weber and one Sonny Schulyer, backed by *Chain Store Daisy*, sung by Ruth Rubenstein (Brunswick 02616-A) and *One Big Union for Two*, duet by Weber and Schulyer, backed by *Nobody Makes a Pass At Me*, a lament by Mildred Weitz (Brunswick 02617-B.). Accompaniments are on two pianos by composer Harold Rome and Baldwin Bergesen.

The Misses Weitz and Rubenstein are two humble garment workers who took time off between sewing buttons to record their little penetrating pieces for the microphone, but sad to relate, Miss Weber and Mr. Schulyer are honey-voiced song birds from the commercial air waves doing a little vocal blacklegging.

It's nice to ponder over the fact that the garment lassies walk away with both the vocal and showmanship honours. Mildred's *Nobody Makes a Pass At Me* is an unpolished gem of proletarian sophistication in the Dorothy Parker manner, minus Miss Parker's now rather tiresome clichés. With a heavy and puzzled heart, Mildred sighs and sings:

"Oh, dear, what can the matter be,
Nobody makes a pass at me?
I use Ovaltine and Listerine, Barbasol and Mistarol, Lifebuoy Soap and Flit.
So why ain't I got 'IT'?
I use Coca Cola and Marsola, Crisco, Lexco and Marmola, Ex-Lax and Vapex.
So why ain't I got SEX?"

It took those hard working union members a year of rehearsals, threaded between sewing hours, to get those *Pins and Needles* stuck into the right places, but the result was more than worth their trouble, the only surprise being that they hadn't done it years before.

For obvious reasons, *Four Little Angels of Peace*, the hit number of the show, hasn't been released here. The scene shows Mussolini, Hitler, Eden and a Japanese general, dressed in haloes and wings, slyly shooting and stabbing each other in the back with machine guns and daggers, concealed beneath their heavenly robes. All sing sweetly:

Four little angels of peace are we,
There is one thing on which we agree.
With foe or with friend,
We will fight to the end.
Just for Peace! Peace! Peace!

A few weeks ago Angel Adolf Hitler was given some new lines to sing:

Now I've got the Sudeten,
There's no need for waitin'
Jawohl, all my plans are now surer.
It will be hotsy totsy
To make the world Nazi,
Under Adolf, the house-paintin' Fuhrer.

Are you listening, Mr. Coward and Mr. Porter?

FIND a negro swing musican with a French name and you can be practically sure he was born in New Orleans within sound of the first despairing wail of the birth of jazz.

Sidney "Pops" Bechet, grand-daddy of the clarinet and now little used soprano sax, is an outstanding example.

Now well over 50, "Pops" still has plenty on the swing ball and is to be heard on Brunswick 02652-B in *Viper Mad*, the tale of a weed addict vocalised by O'Neill Spencer, and *Sweet Patootie*, the swingy legend of a lady who lived down by the jail, with a sign on her door reading *Sweet Patootie For Sale*.

Bechet was playing an old clarinet, held together by elastic and chewing gum, when he was 12 years of age. At 14 he was with the famous "Olympians" lead by the then supreme "Big Eye" Louis Nelson, now almost forgotten in jazz history. Big Eye Louis retired from jazz, or ragtime as it was known then, as early back as 1910, long before the Dixieland Jazz Band came on the scene.

Stocky Sidney got his break when three boys out of the Olympians got a job on the notorious Barbary Coast and took him along with them. It's a fact that swing hit the Barbary Coast long before it was ever heard of in the Eastern states of America.

Playing cornet in the band was Joe "King" Oliver. Years later, Oliver was to make swing history with a band that had Louis Armstrong on third trumpet.

In 1915, Sidney moved to Chicago and joined Cook's Southern Syncopated Orchestra. Cook's band astounded all those who heard it. It toured Europe and is credited in America with introducing jazz for the first time at the Philharmonic Hall in London.

1925 found Bechet in Paris playing in the pit of a revue featuring Josephine Baker. A year later he joined Noble Sissle's famous band, and has remained with Sissle ever since. Accompanying him on his new records are a bunch of boys from the Sissle band.

Sidney Bechet's pure tone and obvious musical sincerity is something well worth studying in this age of swing copyists who all went to play like somebody else—Benny Goodman for example.

THE swing band's return to melody is more noticeable than ever this month, practically half the releases being based on former melodic pops or new compositions.

Two outstanding novelty recordings (I hope that's the right word) are Fats Waller's organ solos *Deep River* and *Go Down Moses*, on H.M.V. B8816 and Mr. Bing Crosby and Mr. Johnny Mercer explaining just what swing is in a wow version of that old favourite *Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Shean* on Brunswick 02653-B.

COLEMAN HAWKINS AND HIS ALL STAR "JAM" BAND.—*Sweet Georgia Brown* and *Out of Nowhere*. Swing from Paris and the best that jazz has to offer. The Hawk's solo in *Out of Nowhere* represents the King of the tenor sax at his inspired top. (H.M.V.-B8812).

THE MILT HERTH TRIO.—*Toy Trumpet* and *Looney Little Tooney*; Hammond organ, piano and drums combine to produce a "noise" that's nice on the ears and definitely swingy in spots. If only cinema organs were played like this! (Brunswick 02651).

(*Continued on page* 324)

Swing Records Reviewed
(*continued from page* 323)

LEONARD FEATHER AND YE OLDE ENGLISH SWYNGE BAND—*Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes* and *Early One Morning*; Record critic, Leonard Feather has definitely struck on something novel in swing with his treatment of two tradition-soaked ballads. (Decca F6810).

TEDDY WILSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA.—*The Way You Look To-night* and *Easy to Love*. Two film tunes scorched on both sides by that little brown bird, Billie Holiday. Also incline the ear to the Wilson piano and some nice alto sax by Johnny Hodges. (Vocalion S.184-A.)

ROSETTA HOWARD AND HER HARLEM HAMFATS.—*If You're a Viper* and *Rosetta Blues*. You don't have to be a viper to catch on to the real thing in Harlem folk tunes. Sky is high and so am I, sings Rosetta. You will be, too. (Vocalion S.202-A.)

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA.—*London Bridge Is Falling Down* and *Stop Beatin' Around the Mulberry Bush*. Harlem's No. 1 swing band finds something old to dress up in new clothes. You may disagree, but you'll listen just the same. (Brunswick 02658-A.)

KEN JOHNSON AND HIS WEST INDIAN DANCE ORCHESTRA.—*Snakehips Swing* and *Exactly Like You*. A weak rhythm section lets down an English swing band of outstanding soloists and talent. The stuff is there, but it's not mellow as yet. (Decca F.6854.)

THE SPENCER TRIO.—*Baby Won't You Please Come Home* and *Lorna Doone Short Bread*. Piano, clarinet and drums that spent an afternoon in Africa with such swell results decline into just another trio. Buster Bailey is still tops on the black stick, though. (Brunswick 02657-A.)

WOODY HERMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA.—*Carolina In The Morning* and *Trouble In Mind*. A white band leader that sings the blues like a negro and a white band that sounds as if it should be playing in Harlem. You'll like the swingy version of your old favourite *Carolina*. (Vocalion S.201-B.)

"FATS" WALLER AND HIS CONTINENTAL RHYTHM.—*Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Don't Try Your Jive On Me*. Typical Harlem jive in the best Waller manner recorded right here in England at the H.M.V. studios. Fats kicks out on the organ and sings at his merriest top. (H.M.V. BD-5415.)

BENNY GOODMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA.—*You Forgot To Remember* and *Blue Skies*. Two Goodman classics from out of the past re-issued for the film. The band was its top when these were made and represent a grand sing coupling. (H.M.V. B8809.)

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BOOK REVIEWS

IT is axiomatic that the movies need a historian. Unfortunately, writing about the movies has got into the hands of people who have taken up the cinema only in the last few years.

Going to see Mr. Cochran's *Flashbacks*, or sitting through the recent revivals of Rudolph Valentino's films, it became clear that most of the critics who attended these performances never went to the movies at all in the old silent days. In those days the movies were patronised by ordinary people who paid a few coppers and who, by doing so, made possible its present pre-eminence, while the yahoos of culture were busy proclaiming the cinema a "nine days wonder" and feverishly yapping about the plays of such as Bernard Shaw, Granville Barker and Oscar Wilde.

Now that such things fall rather flat, these people go to the movies to write articles about films they see. They have done their best to take all the action, guts and character out of the films. They like talkie-talkies and they don't like action. They are now discovering what the ninepennies discovered years ago, that such tough nuts as Spencer Tracy, Jimmy Cagney and Paul Muni are great actors.

They spend their free evenings writing histories of the Movies and one of them has just appeared called *History of the Film* by Maurice Bardèche and Robert Brasillach (Allen & Unwin, 18*s*.). Typical view of these two philosophers of the film is this one about W. C. Fields—"In *If I Had a Million*, only the most tenacious fans could tolerate Fields, when he called his plump lady friend 'My bird,' or 'My chicken'. Most of his more recent films are excellent. They are light-hearted affairs full of raillery, occasionally quite witty and always lacking the vulgarity of his earlier vehicles. The celebrated *If I Had a Million* was far from meriting the success it obtained and has already been forgotten. . . . Its verbal comedy was tiring as was also the film about the English manservant in America, *Ruggles of Red Gap*."

Or this one about Douglas Fairbanks at the height of his fame—"He made *Robin Hood* in which the story is garbled so lightheartedly that it would be absurd to take anybody to task about it. A new fairyland opened before him: he had won Mary Pickford's love, a great deal of fame and any number of dollars."

Boiled down, their point of view about films is best revealed in the statement that the coming of the talkies showed "that whatever illusion we may have to the contrary, the film is a slave to fashion and to the vulgarest of influences."

The useful thing about the book is that it gives a great deal of information about the early film industry in Italy, Russia, Denmark, Germany and Sweden.

It is time that somebody who likes going to the movies wrote a history of them. R.C.

MISS LANCHESTER must have sat down one day and said to herself: "I might as well write a book while Charles is doing 'St. Martin's Lane'!" You have only to look at the correspondence column of any film paper to see that everybody is interested in everything to do with films stars. And here was Miss Lanchester with a film star right on the family hearthrug. So *Charles Laughton and I* (Faber and Faber, 8*s*. 6*d*.) is a series of chapters about what Charles was doing at a given time, and what 'I' was doing at the same time. It is inevitably more concerned with 'I' than with Charles Laughton, but Mr. Laughton, hovering somewhere in the middle distance, emerges as a pleasant sort of person, with an enormous capacity for hard work and an obvious integrity of purpose.

Doubtless many people would think it both stimulating and important to know what Shakespeare was doing between lunch and dinner on May 8th, 1599. Posterity will only have to reach out a hand and take *Charles Laughton and I* from the shelf to discover that Miss Lanchester used green face powder, magenta lipstick and mauve eye shadow, that she was double jointed, and that she re-arranged the flowers twice a week. They may similarly discover that Mr. Laughton went to Hollywood and found Miss Norma Shearer charming and easy to get on with; that he came back to the Old Vic and found Miss Baylis not so charming and not so easy to get on with, and that when he was living in the country he spent most of the day in his pyjamas.

But maybe the publishers are overstating the case when they say that this is "one of the best and most intimate biographies that has ever been written."

M. GLOCK.

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